WORLD / A26

Japan PM draws fire for suicide of farm minister

NEWS / A5

Malacañang worries about Panlilio's safety; cops reinforce security

ACROSS / A17

Police chief of Cabuyao, Laguna, shot dead

NEWS / A2

Erap drops request to hold JV's wedding in Tanay, asks court to let him attend it in San Juan

TU's contrary reactions make it 'laughingstock'

KUNG ANO-ANO NA LANG ANG NAISIP NG MGA TALUNAN!

By T. Quismundo, C. Balana and G. Cabacungan Jr.

IF TEAM UNITY (TU) FILES a motion to declare a failure of elections in Metro Manila and 15 provinces, this would make the

TU's 2 CONTRARY/ A10

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Wednesday, May 30, 2007 ★★ 8 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 171 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

Another militant farmer seized by 6 armed men

By Marlon Ramos
Inquirer Southern Luzon

CAMP VICENTE LIM, LAGUNA—BARELY A DAY after a Protestant pastor was seized by police agents, a militant farmer and member of the human rights group Karapatan was reported kidnapped in Nasugbu, Batangas.

Diego Samonteza, also a member of the local

ANOTHER/ A20

GMA told fraud to spark crisis

Rally protests Muslim areas profiled as cheating centers

By Nash B. Maulana
Inquirer Mindanao
and Cathy C. Yamsuan
in Manila

COTABATO CITY—MAGUINDANAOANS YESterday slammed what they said was the systematic stereotyping of Muslim communities with accusations of vote fraud, even as fresh reports of poll irregularities poured in from election watchdogs.

Maguindanao police director Supt. Adam Piang estimated that 20,000 people, including barangay captains and local residents, took part in the protests outside the provincial capitol in Shariff Aguak and in other parts of the town.

The residents told the INQUIRER they were protesting the allegations that no actual voting took place in their province on May 14 and that the results were rigged in favor of the Team Unity (TU) senatorial candidates.

Ustadz Muhammad Sulaiman, head of the Ulama Congress of the Philippines, said that while Muslims had fought for reforms, they

RALLY/ A12

All 11 GO bets speak as one in manifesto

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan and TJ Burgonio

SPEAKING AS ONE FOR THE first time since the May 14 elections, the Genuine Opposition (GO) senatorial candidates yesterday issued a manifesto denouncing massive election fraud and warning the Arroyo administration that it would be courting another political crisis if the election results were tampered with.

Eight of the GO candidates are currently in the winning circle, according to official and unofficial tallies of the Commission on Elections (Comelec) and the National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel).

"We, the senatorial candidates of the Genuine Opposition, strongly denounce the numerous cases of actual and attempted electoral fraud, cheating, manipulation and sabotage in relation to the senatorial elections and the ongoing counting of votes," the manifesto signed by all 11 GO candidates read in part.

The manifesto was issued a day after the administration ticket accused the GO coalition of cheating in the elections, and just as poll watchdog group Halalang Marangal (Halal) released its initial assessment of its

GMA WARNED/ A10

OH NO, IT'S ME! Miss Japan Riyo Mori, 20, registers shock and awe after hearing she'd been adjudged the loveliest among the 77 candidates from around the world in the 56th Miss Universe contest in Mexico City. The pageant is owned by Donald Trump and NBC. AFP

ELEKSYON 2007

COMELEC From 79 provinces and 13 Metro Manila COCs As of 12 p.m., May 29			NAMFREL 179,655 out of 224,748 precincts As of 5:52 p.m., May 26, 2007		
1	LEGARDA	16,469,017	1	LEGARDA	14,088,197
2	ESCUDERO	16,340,593	2	ESCUDERO	13,838,440
3	LACSON	13,818,072	3	LACSON	11,951,942
4	VILLAR	13,754,310	4	VILLAR	11,609,985
5	PANGILINAN	13,111,878	5	AQUINO	11,041,088
6	AQUINO	12,872,173	6	PANGILINAN	11,035,941
7	ANGARA	11,079,515	7	ANGARA	9,648,879
8	ARROYO	10,563,507	8	CAYETANO, A.	8,970,598
9	CAYETANO A	10,469,777	9	HONASAN	8,966,150
10	HONASAN	10,181,782	10	ARROYO	8,928,756
11	TRILLANES	9,803,763	11	TRILLANES	8,657,146
12	PIMENTEL	9,617,526	12	PIMENTEL	8,398,589
13	ZUBIRI	9,556,657	13	ZUBIRI	8,167,850
14	RECTO	9,478,074	14	RECTO	7,947,766
15	DEFENSOR	8,810,953	15	DEFENSOR	7,492,891
16	PICHAY	8,556,797	16	PICHAY	7,378,468
17	ROCO	7,589,405	17	ROCO	6,543,428
18	MONTANO	6,771,570	18	MONTANO	5,974,219
19	SOTTO	6,648,824	19	OSMENA	5,696,910
20	OSMEÑA	6,384,537	20	SOTTO	5,584,870

Davao City keeps it 8-2-2 for GO bets

By Jocelyn R. Uy and Nikko Dizon

THE NEARLY HALF-MILLION VOTES FROM Davao City kept the Genuine Opposition's lead at 8-2-2, with Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III still hanging on at No. 12, when the Commission on Elections sitting as the National Board of Canvassers (NBC) adjourned for the day on the 13th day of the national canvass.

The NBC ended its session at noon yesterday after reading out the vote tallies from Davao City, which had seven GO candidates, three Team Unity (TU) candidates and two independents (7-3-2) in the winning circle.

Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. said the early adjournment was not due to a "slow

DAVAO/ A12

Lacson: Sarmiento should quit

By Nikko Dizon and Jocelyn R. Uy

ELECTION COMMISSIONER RENE SARMIENTO yesterday strongly denied he had resigned as chief investigator of alleged election fraud in Maguindanao because of political pressure.

Sarmiento issued the denial in an interview with the INQUIRER after his surprise decision to step down as head of Task Force Maguindanao had prompted speculations from various groups.

Sarmiento reiterated he quit the task force "purely for health reasons."

But a militant Roman Catholic priest, Fr. Joe Dizon, told reporters there seemed to be pressure being brought to bear on Sarmiento "to stop doing what is right" and claimed that this was why the commissioner quit as task force chief.

Reelectionist Sen. Panfilo Lacson called on

LACSON/ A10

Grandmother's dream comes true for Miss U

MEXICO CITY—A 20-YEAR-OLD dancer from Japan was crowned Miss Universe 2007, marking only the second time her country had won the world beauty title.

Dressed in a black, red and purple Japanese-style gown, Riyo Mori nervously grabbed the hands of first runner-up 22-year-old Natalia Guimaraes of Brazil just before the winner was announced at Mexico City's National Auditorium on Monday night (Tuesday morning in Manila).

Mori then threw her hands up and covered her mouth, overcome with emotion. But she composed herself enough to catch the diamond-and-pearl-studded headpiece valued at $250,000 as it slipped off her head when Miss Universe 2006 Zuleyka Rivera of Puerto Rico crowned her. Mori immediately placed it back on her head.

Anna Theresa Licaros, 22, from the Philippines, was chosen Miss Photogenic. Ningning Zhang from China, 20, won the Miss Congeniality award.

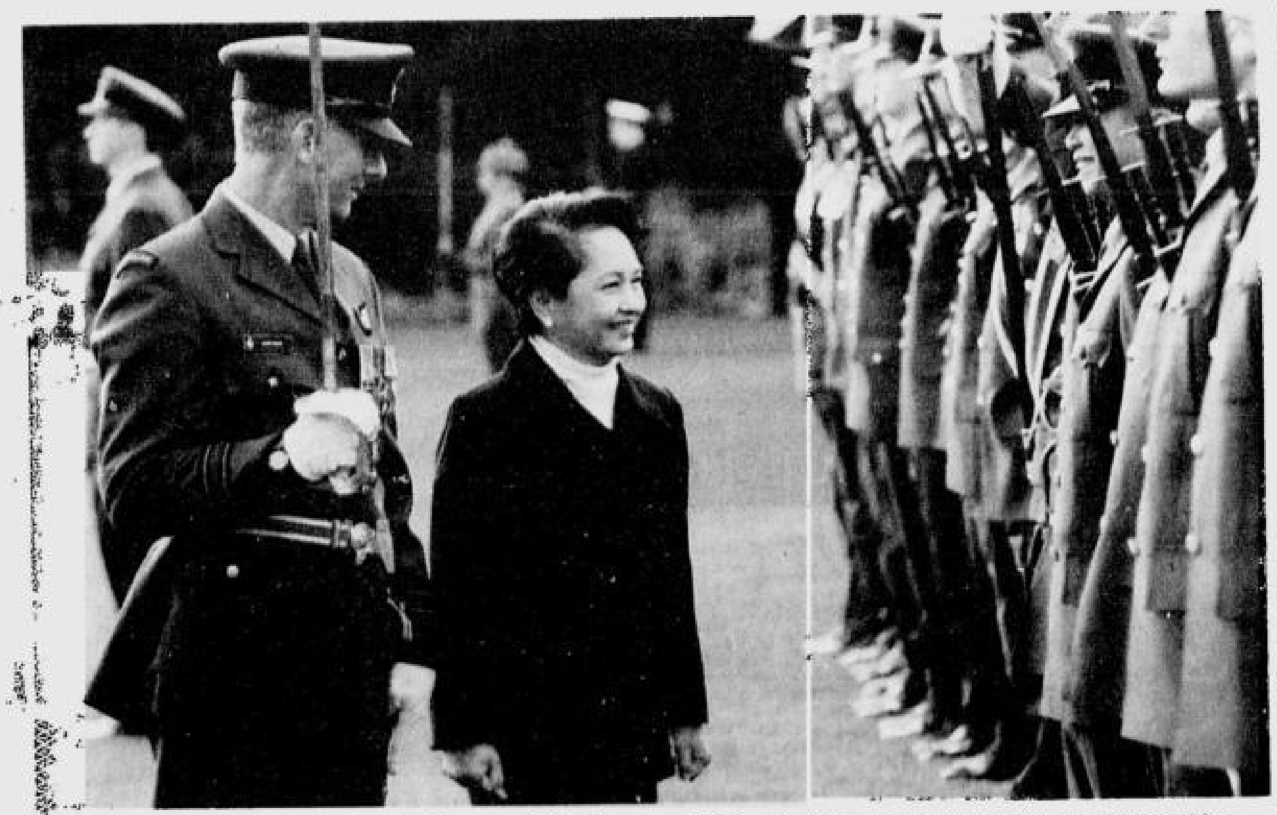
Miss USA Rachel Smith, who slipped and fell to the floor during the evening gown competition and was jeered by the Mexican audience during the interview phase, was the contest's fourth runner-up.

Mori, from the small town of

GRANDMOTHER'S/ A20

PHILIPPINES

MISS PHILIPPINES IS MISS PHOTOGENIC. Anna Theresa Licaros poses with her Rogaska crystal trophy. AFP



PERSONAL TOUCH: Despite the official ceremonials of a state visit, President Macapagal-Arroyo stops to banter with a woman member of the honor guard that welcomed her to Government House in Wellington, New Zealand. MALACAÑANG PHOTO

GMA STATE VISIT

New Zealand pours $1.23B in fresh investments into RP

By Michael Lim Ubac

AUCKLAND—PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARroyo's state visit to New Zealand has led to the forging of deals involving $1.23 billion in fresh investments in the Philippines, and in preferential treatment to be accorded to Filipinos seeking jobs in this former British colony.

The biggest investment will benefit the environment. A total of $1 billion has been allotted to reforest the Philippines' bald mountains, particularly in Mindanao, said former Environment Secretary Heherson Alvarez, now the presidential adviser on land reform.

"It will be a joint venture by Finland and New Zealand through the company Shannolyne," Alvarez said.

He said the huge fund would be used to plant timber in 200,000 hectares of denuded forest in Prosperidad, Agusan del Sur. The country has some four million hectares of damaged forests.

During the bilateral talks, New Zealanders also asked Ms Arroyo to accelerate the signing of an Asean-Australian-New Zealand free trade agreement, according to Trade Secretary Peter Favila.

Favila said the trip was very encouraging. "It's not a new market, but a market whose potential we were not able really to tap in the past. Now the doors are open to us," he said.

Ms Arroyo herself happily announced at a brief meeting with the Filipino community at the Auckland Museum the renewed diplomatic ties, trade investments and other benefits generated by the visit, which took her and her party to Wellington, Waitangi and Auckland in a span of two days.

The areas of cooperation forged by both countries focused on agricultural and dairy

NEW ZEALAND/ A20

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Luzon and eastern section of Visayas will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms mainly in the afternoon or evening. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy skies.

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	**Iloilo/Bacolod**	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	**Roxas**	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	**Cebu**	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	**Tacloban**	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	**Gen. Santos**	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	**Zamboanga**	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	**Cagayan de Oro**	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	**Davao**	Partly Cloudy

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Party-lists file raps vs canvassers

By Jerome Aning and Norman Bordadora

MILITANT PARTY-LIST GROUPS YESterday filed charges of "electoral sabotage" against the provincial canvassers of Zamboanga Sibugay for allegedly padding the votes of supposed administration-backed party-list groups United Movement Against Drugs (Uni-Mad) and Cooperative-Network Party (Coop-Natco).

The leaders of Bayan Muna, Anakpawis, Gabriela, Suara Bangsamoro and Kabataan trooped to the Commission on Elections in Manila to file charges against Zamboanga Sibugay board of provincial canvassers chair Edmund Rey Calo, vice chair Jeric Kagaoan and secretary Manuel Muyargas for alleged violation of Republic Act No. 9369.

RA 9369, or the Automated Elections Systems Act of 2007, provides that election personnel who change at least 5,000 votes on one document or 10,000 votes in all other cases would be charged with a new offense known as electoral sabotage, which is penalized with life imprisonment.

According to the complainants' lawyer, Neri Colmenares, the alleged tampering was done when the entries on the certificates of canvass (CoCs) from seven towns were transferred to the statement of votes (SoV). In most cases, the total number of votes written in words on the CoCs, when transferred to the SoV, were increased by adding one or more digits.

The CoCs covered the towns of Kabasalan, R.T. Lim, Siay, Malangas, Diplahan, Imelda and Talusan.

Submitted to the Comelec as evidence of the vote-padding were a copy of the SoV of Municipality No. 0000160 and copies of the municipal CoCs. The entries in the SoV did not match the figures in the CoCs.

Instead of the 1,723 votes in the CoCs, the provincial canvassers gave Coop-Natco 10,447 votes in the SoV.

Uni-Mad had 281 votes in the same CoCs but the provincial canvassers padded this to 16,194 votes in the SoV.

"Only members of the canvass committee and its tabulators or members of the provincial BOC could have been responsible for the tampering of votes on the SoV because [this] could have only been tampered with when it was under their custody," Colmenares said.

Citing the discrepancies, Colmenares successfully moved for the deferment of the tabulation of the Zamboanga Sibugay party-list votes by the national canvassers in Manila.

Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo, one of those who trooped to the Comelec, said the alleged vote-padding was not necessarily meant to ensure the victory of Uni-Mad and Coop-Natco but "to prevent us from winning more votes and getting more seats in Congress."

Explained Kabataan president and first nominee Raymond Palatino, who came with Ocampo: "The padding increases the actual number of votes a party-list group has to get—which should be at least two percent of the votes cast for the party-list system—making it difficult for smaller party-list groups like Suara and Kabataan to win a seat."

Representatives Liza Maza of Gabriela and Rafael Mariano of Anakpawis joined Ocampo and Palatino at the Comelec.

Among the highest "doctored" increases cited in the complaint were Coop-Natco's votes of 182 in Malangas town and 290 in nearby Imelda, which were written on the SoV as 2,182 and 2,290, respectively.

Erap withdraws bid for JV's Tanay wedding

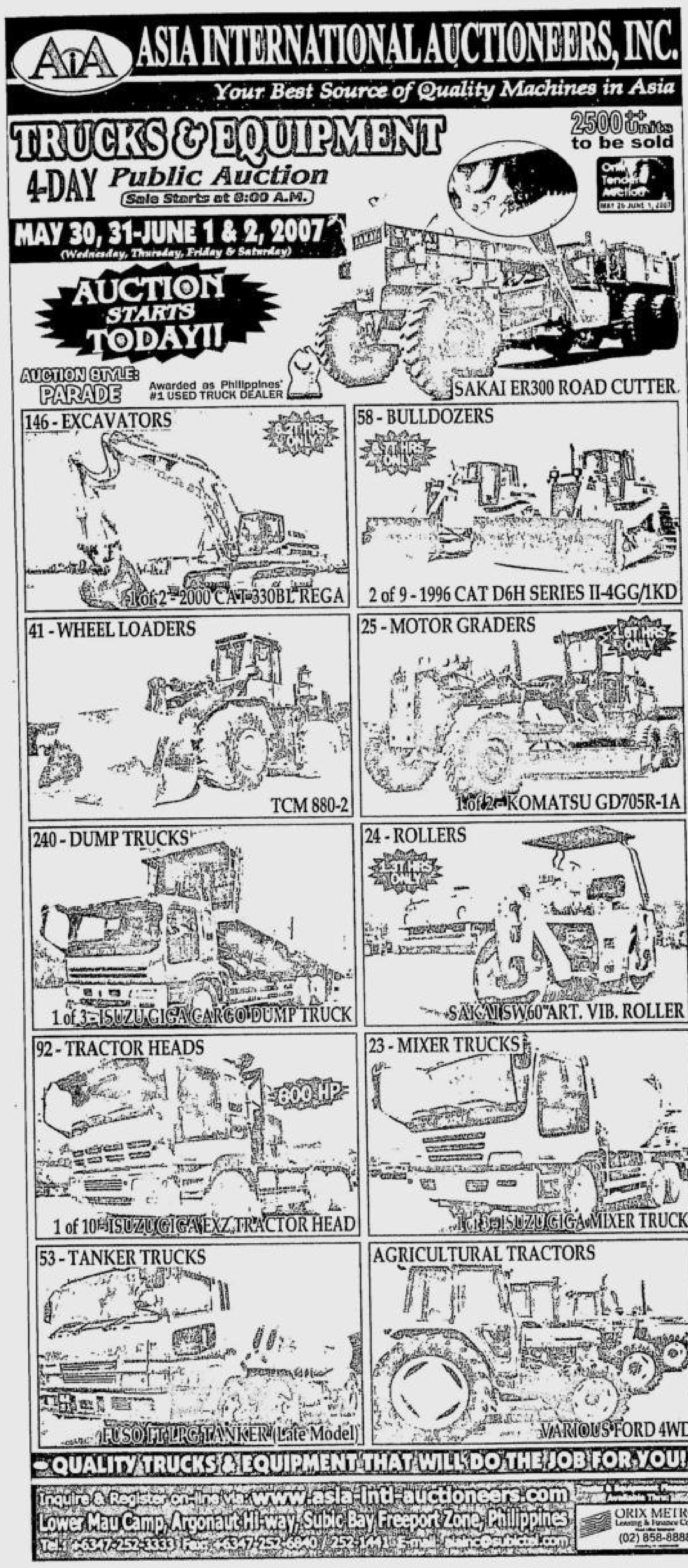
SAYING IT'S TOO LATE TO REWRITE the invitations, deposed President Joseph Estrada yesterday withdrew his appeal to the Sandiganbayan to allow the June 9 wedding of his son, San Juan Mayor Joseph Victor "JV" Ejercito, in his resthouse and detention quarters in Tanay, Rizal.

The 70-year-old Estrada instead asked the antigraft court to let him attend the 6 p.m. ceremony at the John the Baptist Church in his hometown San Juan, and the reception at the NBC Tent in the Bonifacio Global City in Taguig.

A motion filed by his lawyer Jose Alberto Flaminiano indicated that Estrada had changed his mind after realizing the difficulty of making adjustments in the venue at this point.

"Moreover, invitations have already been printed and sent out, and it would be difficult, if not impossible, to recall all the wedding invitations, or to announce a different venue for the wedding," the motion said.

The Sandiganbayan special division handling Estrada's plunder case has twice rejected his request for a Tanay wedding for Ejercito.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Mike A given until June 22 to answer suit

By DJ Yap

A MAKATI COURT HAS GIVEN THE President's husband Jose Miguel Arroyo until June 22 to show evidence that there is no basis for the P12.5 million class action suit filed by journalists against him.

Should Arroyo fail again to appear at that hearing, he shall have waived his right to present evidence in his defense, said Judge Zenaida Galapate-Laguilles of the Makati Regional Trial Court.

In an order dated May 23, Laguilles also asked Arroyo to submit the necessary medical certificates to explain his absence in recent court proceedings.

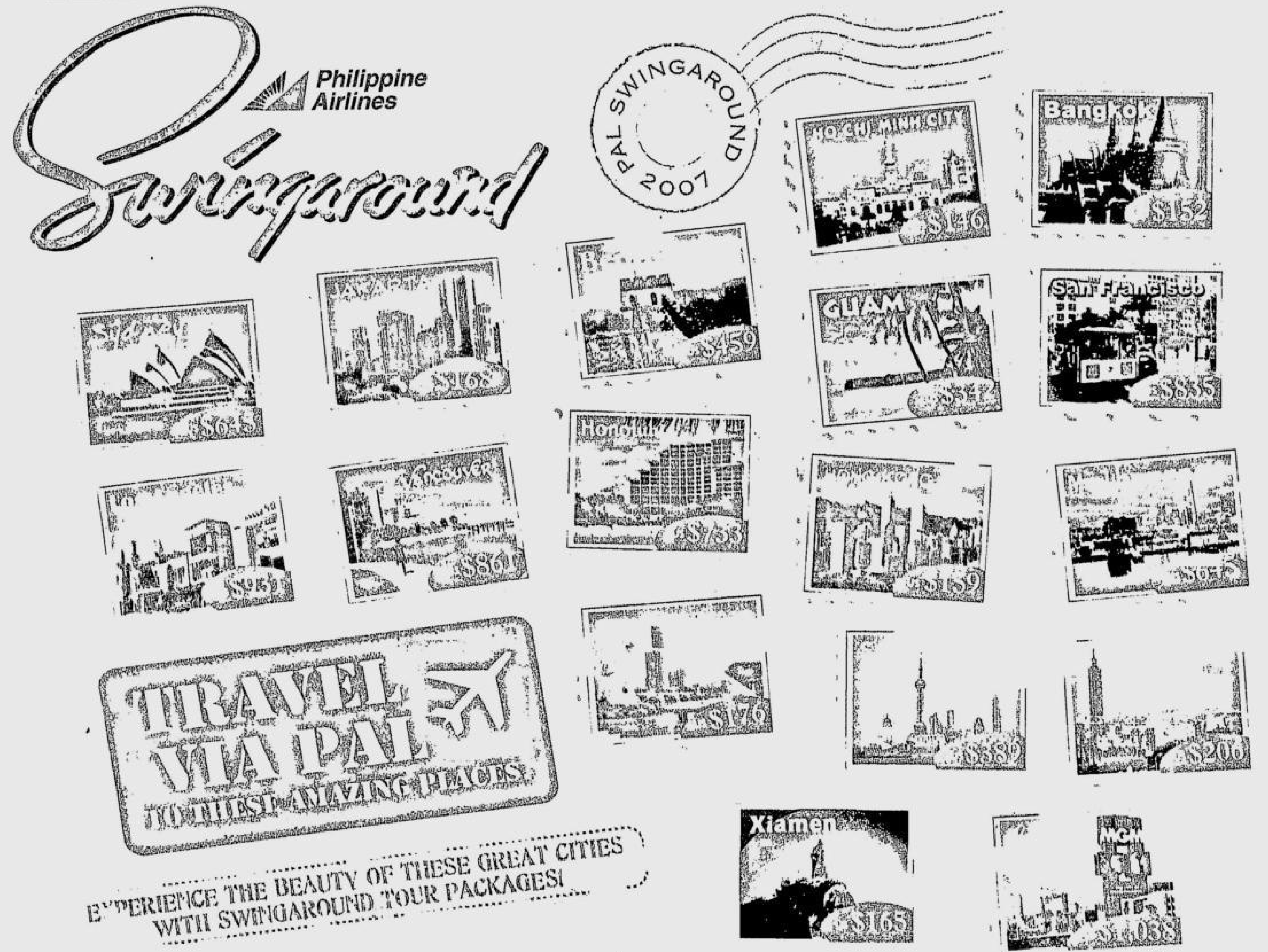
The same day, the complainants—some 36 individual journalists and three media organizations—indicated their intention to pursue a class action suit against Arroyo, despite his announcement that he would drop more than 40 libel cases he had lodged against journalists.

The suit, which the journalists called a "social experiment," accused Arroyo of abusing his right to file libel complaints and, in effect, curtailing press freedom.

Arroyo, after surviving high-risk heart surgery, recently said he was withdrawing the libel cases he filed against members of the press over the past several months.

The journalists, in a joint statement, chided Arroyo for making it appear that his decision to drop the libel cases was out of generosity.

In the libel complaints, Arroyo had maintained that he should be treated like a private citizen, as he does not hold any public office. He also said filing libel cases was his right.



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Don't drag GMA, Comelec into row, Dy urges Padaca

By Villamor Visaya Jr.
Inquirer Northern Luzon

CAUAYAN CITY—REELECTIONIST Gov. Grace Padaca should stop accusing President Macapagal-Arroyo and the Commission on Elections of meddling in the election row in the province, gubernatorial candidate Benjamin Dy said yesterday.

PADACA

"This is a purely local post-election affair. Please spare the President and the Comelec because they are not meddling in any way," Dy, a former Isabela governor himself, said.

Padaca's proclamation has been stalled after Dy filed a protest, citing irregularities allegedly committed by Padaca's allies in several towns.

Dy has sought the exclusion from the official canvass of supposedly questionable election returns from Ilagan, Tumauini and Echague towns.

"This is a matter of right, a matter of due process. Let us not use the media to turn the tide against me," Dy said.

Padaca had said she believed she beat Dy by some 12,000 votes. She also denied Dy's allegation her camp had resorted to cheating.

Dy, however, insisted Padaca answer the allegations of cheating, particularly in Isabela's first district where the influential Albano clan supported her.

Isabela Rep. Rodolfo Albano III earlier denied Dy's charge.

Dy said he had submitted to the Comelec in Manila videos, photographs, documents and witnesses' statements to prove that "manipulation of votes and other [forms of] election fraud" had been committed by his rivals.

He said he had won "fair and square," based on his camp's copies of the election returns.

Dy, a candidate of the opposition Nationalist People's Coalition, is the younger brother of Faustino Dy Jr. whom Padaca defeated to become governor in 2004.

Until Faustino Jr.'s loss, the Dys had ruled Isabela since 1969 when the patriarch, Faustino Dy Sr., was elected governor.

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Corrections

IN THE MAY 26 ISSUE, an Across the Nation story on Page A14—"Albay gov rues delayed rehab fund release"—misspelled the surname of the governor of Albay. The correct spelling of the governor's name is Fernando Gonzales—not Gonzalez.

* * *

IN THE MAY 27 ISSUE, a photo caption on Page A9 misspelled the surname of the US ambassador to the Philippines. The correct spelling of the US ambassador's name is Kristie Kenney—not Kenny.

* * *

IN THE MAY 28 ISSUE, a front-page story—"Kampi to challenge De Venecia for speakership"—misspelled the first name of the representative of the sixth district of Cebu. The correct spelling of the representative's name is Nerissa—not Narissa—Soon-Ruiz.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City, fax Nos. 897-47-93/94; e-mail address: daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, May 30, 2007
8th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Sir 36:1, 4-5, 10-17
Gospel: Mark 10:32-45

Jesus and his disciples were on the road going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead. The Twelve were anxious and those who followed were afraid. (…)

James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Jesus and said to him, "Master, we want you to grant us what we are going to ask of you." And he said, "What do you want me to do for you?" They answered, "Grant us to sit one at your right and one at your left when you come in your glory."

But Jesus said to them, "You don't know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup that I drink or be baptized in the way I am baptized?" They answered, "We can." And Jesus told them, "The cup that I drink you will drink, and you will be baptized in the way I am baptized. But to sit at my right or at my left is not mine to grant. It has been prepared for others."

On hearing this, the other 10 were angry with James and John; Jesus then called them to him and said, "As you know, the so-called rulers of the nations act as tyrants and their great ones oppress them. But it shall not be so among you; whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you shall make himself slave of all. Think of the Son of Man who has not come to be served but to serve and to give his life to redeem many."

Commentary

This is a prayer to God of the universe, to put dread into the nations, so that they will know God as the Jews do, and that there is no God but God. It is a prayer for a nation, a people-a prayer of the Jews. Parts of it are still very apropos, and others, in light of Jesus, in need of altering.

Jesus' prayer, life, and teachings are based not on power and might but on obedience, submission to the will of God, living with no violence, and forgiveness which takes us on the way of the cross. Jesus leads us to the cross and knows our fear, yet invites us to walk with him and share in his sufferings and dying, so to share in his glory and rising. Two of the disciples want power/prestige/position, and they ask for it, causing indignation in the group. But Jesus reminds them that in his community, power is found in serving the needs of all, being the least and giving your life as ransom for many-with Jesus. We are back in Ordinary Time-time to practice all we have leaned in these last full months.

Palace fears for Fr. Ed's security

CAMP OLIVAS, PAMPANGA—CENTRAL Luzon police director Chief Supt. Ismael Rafanan said yesterday he has assigned seven more policemen to secure newly elected provincial governor Ed Panlilio after three top Palace officials called him expressing concern over the priest-turned-politician's safety.

The officials—Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, political adviser Gabriel Claudio and Secretary Edgardo Pamintuan of the Luzon Urban Beltway—had called Rafanan saying they feared that any attack on Panlilio's life could "be used as an issue" against President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"[Ermita, Claudio and Pamintuan] called me on Monday to say they're very much concerned about the safety of Among Ed (Panlilio)," Rafanan said.

Rafanan said the calls from Malacañang came after the murder on Monday of barangay captain Mario "Jomar" Nulud, one of Panlilio's political leaders in Guagua town.

Rafanan said he assured the concerned officials that he has reinforced the security escorts of Panlilio by assigning seven members of the police's Provincial Mobile Group (PMG) to secure him.

Gov. Ed refuses gun

But Panlilio on Tuesday turned down the additional security detail. He found them "too many" and told Rafanan he preferred to be secured by the three policemen who have been securing him since April.

The new security men, however, continue to trail Panlilio's vehicle, working as back-up forces, Rafanan said.

Panlilio also continues to wear a bulletproof vest but he has refused to carry a gun.

The priest has stayed in various safe houses since he was proclaimed governor-elect.

"We are just taking precautionary measures," a member of Panlilio's security force told the INQUIRER.

Panlilio has not yet decided where he would take up residence but he assured that it "definitely would be in a place where I am accessible to my constituents." *Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon*

Bayan Muna offers expertise to Pampanga

By Norman Bordadora

BAYAN MUNA REP. SATUR OCAMPO YESterday offered his party-list group's expertise in mass-base organizing to Pampanga governor-elect Ed Panlilio to ensure the latter of continuous popular support when he starts the difficult task of governance.

Ocampo said having a grassroots organization would keep the support for Panlilio from eroding when he starts making decisions that might go against the interests of those who helped him get elected but which would be necessary for good governance.

"If you have an organization, you will never lose mass support," Ocampo said.

He said Panlilio won the governorship on the strength of his being a novel alternative to candidates linked to corruption and illegal gambling, while Bayan Muna had been winning because of its sophisticated organization and pro-people philosophy.

Bayan Muna is currently in second place in the Comelec canvass of party-list votes.

"It will do us well [to] draw from these two experiences together," Ocampo said at a forum on political reform that included Isabela Gov. Grace Padaca.

Political upset

Ocampo said Bayan Muna helped Padaca score a major political upset in 2004 against one of Cagayan Valley's well-entrenched political families, the Dys.

He said Padaca's experience showed that the euphoria of victory should be followed up with mass-based organizing for the necessary reforms to be realized.

"Grace's victory was a breakthrough in Isabela ... but when she started making certain decisions, she lost support. But this has been addressed," Ocampo said.

Padaca admitted her anti-"jueteng" drive alienated many Isabela mayors who needed the proceeds from the illegal numbers game to support their programs for their constituents.

She said this became apparent when her margin over her rival in this year's election, former Gov. Benjamin Dy, was half that over her rival in 2004, Dy's brother Faustino Dy Jr.

"The 2007 elections were more difficult. Grace Padaca was no longer a novelty. Before, it was (enough to say) Grace was for the *masa* (masses). But then, the jueteng collectors and the timber poachers are also members of the *masa*," Padaca said.

Panlilio was supposed to join them at the forum but "urgent concerns" kept him in Pampanga and he participated via teleconference.

He spoke first and then hung up, thus, he did not have a chance to take Ocampo up on his offer of assistance.

"I have a special stake in the province because I am from Pampanga ... I am ready to meet with Father Ed," Ocampo said.

'THEY CAN'T BUY ME'

Poll worker takes slogan to the grave

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

GUAGUA, PAMPANGA—TO THE END, the children of slain barangay captain Mario "Jomar" Nulud believed he was a principled man. On his coffin, they displayed a campaign pin that their father wore like a badge of honor as he worked to bring Fr. Ed Panlilio to the governor's post against some of the richest and most powerful contenders in the province.

Just the size of a regular cookie, the pin said: "EDaku asali (They cannot buy me)."

Nulud, head of Barangay San Juan Bautista—where Panlilio served as parish priest from 1999 to March 2007 when the local campaign began—chose to support the priest against the dictates of his party Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi). The administration-backed party chose Lilia Pineda, wife of alleged gambling lord Bong Pineda and a close personal friend of Kapampangan President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, to challenge incumbent governor Mark Lapid, a movie star.

Nulud himself lost in his bid to become councilor of this town but was elated over Panlilio's victory, which has been hailed as something akin to a "people power" revolt in the President's home province.

On Monday, two hooded motorcycle-riding men shot dead 48-year-old Nulud as he was tending to his garden in front of his home along the old MacArthur Highway.

The campaign pin is now fastened to the cover of his white coffin, draped by the Philippine flag. Beside it is a recent photograph of a smiling, stocky Nulud.

It is a piercing political statement after an election that has been marred by numerous complaints of vote buying and cheating.

Panlilio, who began his campaign on a buffalo cart, made the campaign pins to urge voters to go against money politics.

Nulud's wake is held at the village chapel. Elevated to save it from flooding, the chapel was one of his last projects.

"Our father was a decent man. He did not deserve to be killed," said one of his sons.

Two days after the slaying, police investigators have yet to announce a good lead on the identities and whereabouts of the two assassins.

"Very slow" was how Chief Supt. Ismael Rafanan, Central Luzon police director, described the pace of the investigation by the Pampanga police.

Panlilio on Tuesday denounced the killing, calling it "merciless and unjust."

Extrajudicial killings, he said, have no place in a government system that is supposed to be democratic.

Panlilio said he knew Nulud even before he was assigned in 1999 at St. James Church, which is located in Nulud's village in Betis.

In killing Nulud, his attackers denied Guagua residents a "good leader," Panlilio said.

He said he last saw Nulud on Saturday night at the Guagua National Colleges.

"He told me 'Mimingat ka (You better take care).'

"I told him, 'you should be the one to take care.'"

To this, recalled Panlilio, Nulud had replied: "E baleng aku ing mate, aliwa mu sana ika (Never mind if I get killed so long as you are not the one who's killed)."

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Watchdogs report poll fraud in Marawi

By Jerome Aning

A TEAM FROM POLL WATCHDOG KONTRA Daya which monitored the special elections held recently in 13 Lanao del Sur towns yesterday exposed alleged irregularities and manipulations committed during the canvassing of votes in Marawi City.

In one amusing incident, several tally sheets that the six-member team led by Emmie de Jesus were looking for turned up as table cloth in one precinct in Lumbayanage town.

Kontra Daya said that in precinct number 0010-A, the counting area in one of the classrooms in Amai Pak Pak Central Elementary School Marawi where votes for Barangay Kadigilan, Lumbayanage town in Lanao del Sur province were being counted, the ballots did not contain votes for senators.

"With this predicament, the boards of election inspectors and poll watchers decided to place the tally sheets for national positions at the back of the classroom. Later, the tally sheets were used as table cloth," De Jesus said in a statement from Marawi.

De Jesus, who is also secretary-general of the women's group Gabriela, said this was also a "cause of alarm" as the empty tally sheets "might be used to pad votes for TU candidates who are trailing in the senatorial race."

"This practice, whether deliberate or not, is very susceptible to machinations by the Commission on Elections and other parties in interest," she said.

In some precincts, the BEIs deliberately did not read votes cast for some senatorial candidates, she said. In other precincts, where BEIs read the votes for senators, tally sheets showed that Genuine Opposition candidates Loren Legarda, Chiz Escudero, Koko Pimentel and Antonio Trillanes were leading the senatorial race.

The only Team Unity candidate who got as many votes as the GO candidates was Sulu Sultan Jamalul Kiram.

De Jesus said their team also observed numerous irregularities in the conduct of the special polls in the province.

In Masiu town, an hour ride from Marawi, De Jesus said they talked to people who have just voted but whose index fingernails were not marked with indelible ink.

When asked why did not have their nails inked, the voters casually told the Kontra Daya members, "*Para makaboto uli kami* (So that we can vote again)."

There was also unreasonable and unexplained delay in the counting of votes in public schools in Marawi City despite the presence of the BEIs and the poll watchers. In several counting areas, poll watchers were unreasonably barred from entering, De Jesus added.

TU bets want to get it over with—Palace

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

NOBODY IS MORE ANXIOUS FOR THE CANvassing of the senatorial race to be over than the four Team Unity candidates who are hovering near the 12th slot.

"They wish the process [would] be finished as soon as possible to end their anxiety," said Gabriel Claudio, the presidential political adviser.

Claudio was referring to TU candidates Migz Zubiri, Ralph Recto, Mike Defensor and Prospero Pichay.

Zubiri was in 13th place in the latest count of the Commission on Elections yesterday, followed by Recto, Defensor and Pichay.

Zubiri has been seesawing between the last winning slot and the 13th place.

Hope for Zubiri

TU is "hopeful about his [Zubiri's] chances" of making it to the new Senate, Claudio said.

Part of the reason for the delay in the canvassing were the disputes between local candidates, he said.

"That is why we are urging candidates to be more realistic and gracious about accepting the results so that it does not cause the delay in the national canvassing," Claudio said.

Asked how the four administration candidates are taking the suspense-filled canvassing, which will determine their political fortunes, Claudio said: "I think they are submitting themselves to the process."

He said the four TU bets were not in a fight for the last slot.

They will even support each other whatever the final result will be, he said.

"They are hopeful about their chances. If that is not to be so, then as long as the final result is a faithful outcome of the process, I think they will be supportive of their colleagues [who will make it]," Claudio said.

Always together

Claudio said the four candidates are always together, monitoring the counting.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said he was puzzled why the opposition which is leading in the count keeps on complaining about cheating "as if they are the aggrieved parties."

He said the parties should just leave the counting to the Commission on Elections.

Despite the unfavorable results of the senatorial race, Ermita said Malacañang was happy with the overwhelming victory of proadministration candidates in the congressional race as it would mean that there would be no chance of a new impeachment bid against the President.

"All this, the impeachment and the leadership in Congress, is a matter of numbers," he said.

"That is why we in government are happy that despite the not-so-good results in the senatorial [race] because there are more from the opposition, we can clearly see that in the House of Representatives and the local governments, the administration got a very big support," Ermita said.

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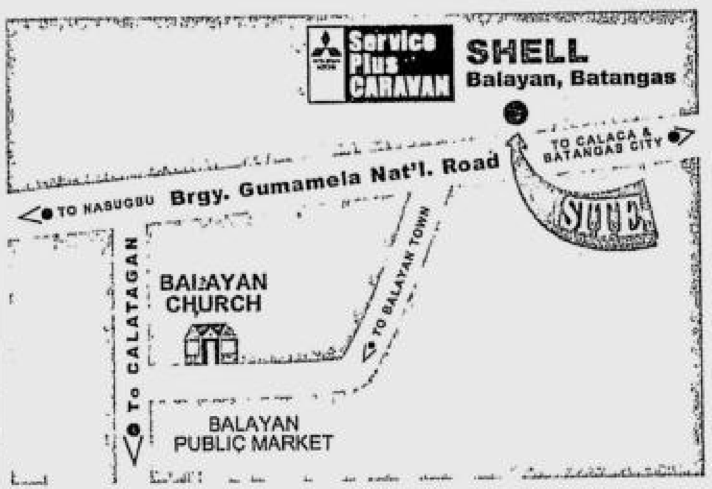

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MITSUBISHI MOTORS

Sonia: No regrets, but are tallies honest?

By Dona Pazzibugan

GENUINE OPPOSITION SENATORIAL candidate Sonia Roco has accepted that she has lost her bid for a Senate seat, but questions the credibility of the ongoing official and unofficial tallies.

The widow of the late senator Raul Roco said she was saddened that "the system" did not allow a neophyte politician like her to break into the Senate.

She regards her 17th ranking in a field of 37 candidates as "good enough," especially when you consider that she was up against six reelectionist senators, five congressmen, four ex-senators, three popular actors and two ex-military officers.

"So, I am a loser. I am No. 17. But I don't believe that that is a just count," Roco said in a news conference with GO candidates Panfilo Lacson, Loren Legarda and Aquilino Pimentel III yesterday.

"The underlying principle in a democracy is: Are the figures honest?" she said.

She said she was not sure if the number of votes she got in the official and unofficial tallies was the correct number, or if her poll watchers were not able to catch instances of *dagdag-bawas* (vote-padding/shaving).

Overspending

"If the Comelec [Commission on Elections] can look at us straight in the face and say we have just counted your votes and these rightfully belong to you, then I can accept it to be a credible election," Roco said.

Roco also denounced campaign overspending, saying winning candidates could not justify their victory by spending beyond the limits set by law.

"If you ran [your campaign] without overspending then you have done a just and honest campaign. But if you have spent so much beyond the call of conscience, then you are there and winning, I don't know if that is just. You are also violating the overspending law," she said.

She said she spent about P12 million, of which around P9 million went to television ads.

"Everybody asked for money, for mobilization, for materials and they asked by the millions. So if money is the only measure so that you can win, then I don't have it," she said.

Roco, however, said she was not conceding defeat yet.

"I've not really conceded, the counting has yet to be completed," she said.

She said she did not have any regrets about running for the Senate.

"My only regret is that the system did not allow somebody who is a newcomer who is offering a platform for education to get in, to serve in public affairs," she said.

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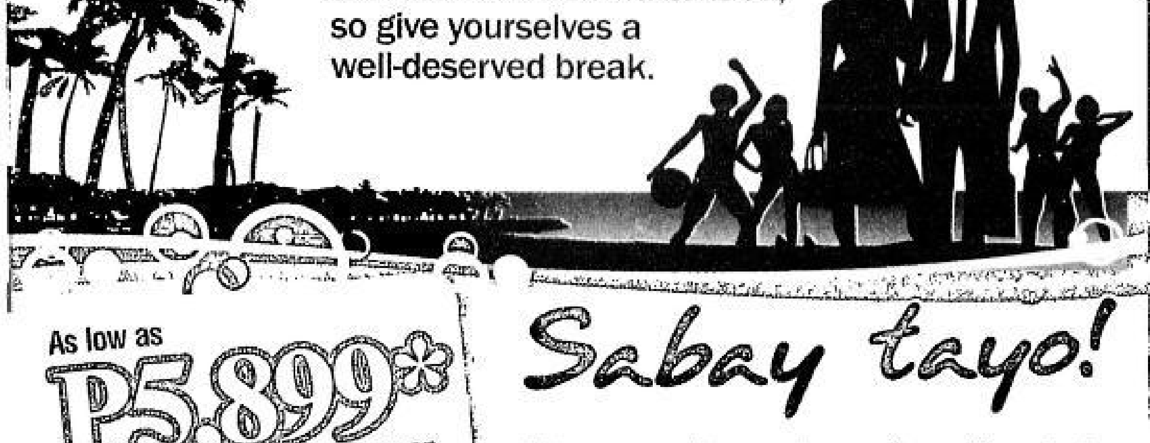
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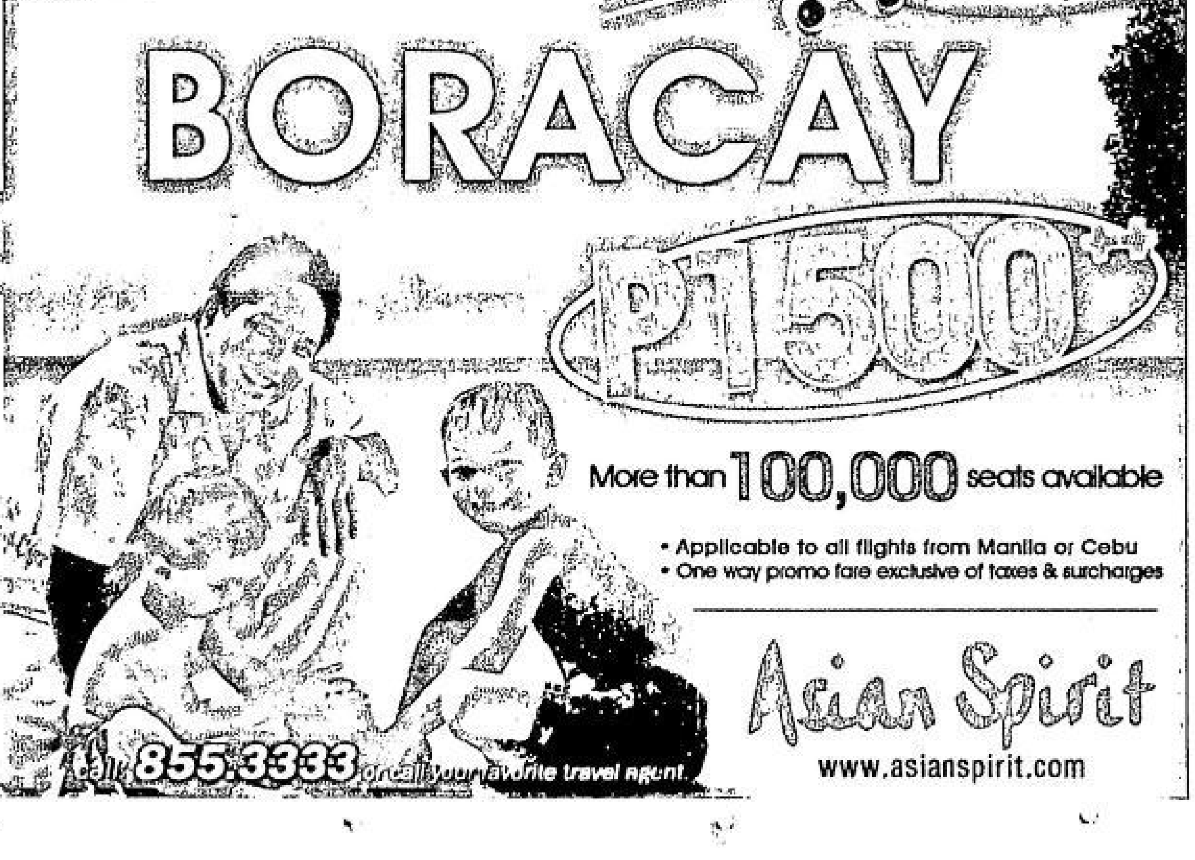
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Bogus Philhealth claims reach P5B

THE SENATE WILL GO AFTER doctors and hospitals that abuse the Philippine Health Insurance Corp. (Philhealth) system through fraudulent medical claims that have robbed the government health card of P5 billion.

"We stumbled on the fact that some hospitals and doctors are fooling around with the system. The damage brought about by dubious claims perpetrated by doctors who charge or make false claims is a sad commentary," Sen. Richard Gordon in yesterday's Senate hearing, Philhealth Vice President Madeleine Valera bared the extent of the abuses of unscrupulous doctors and hospitals that made false claims on cataract removal and circumcisions carried out during medical missions.

Valera assured the senators that the government had taken steps to go after these medical racketeers by stripping them of their accreditation but she admitted that the problem still persists.

She cited the case of a topnotcher doctor who allegedly carried out 2,000 cataract operations in 2005 alone and charged Philhealth with P17 million for the services.

To address this irregularity, Gordon said the Senate should put more teeth into the laws against false claims by medical practitioners against Philhealth to prevent more abuses.

Aside from false claims, Gordon said the government should also address its delay in paying the receivables of hospitals which, if not addressed soon, could drive some hospitals out of business. *Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.*

TO OUR FELLOW FILIPINOS

We, the leaders of Mindanao and its peace-loving people of diverse faiths and cultures, appeal to our countrymen, to the Commission on Elections, the various pollwatch organizations, to all political parties and to media...

LET THE MUSLIM VOTE BE COUNTED.

In the past two weeks, unsubstantiated claims have been made in media that no voting took place in the province of Maguindanao.

On the unverified word of a nameless, faceless person who said that fraud had been committed in a voting area, plus unsubstantiated claims by a few others regarding alleged irregularities, the opposition has demanded that the votes of more than 300,000 Maguindanaoans be voided.

This ignores the declaration of hundreds of Maguindanao teachers that they did oversee proper elections and canvassing in their province, and the reports of election inspectors that poll documents were given to pollwatchers with proper IDs.

Amid such disregard for the testimony of Maguindanaoans, the historic bias against Filipino Muslims is rearing its ugly head. The opposition is rekindling past prejudice about Muslims being unable to vote freely and count ballots honestly.

Unfortunately, some pollwatch groups and media people have echoed the bigoted line that "that's the way voting is done in Mindanao."

This kind of thinking is a contemptible and condemnable attack on the integrity of Muslims and other people of Mindanao. To this brazen attempt to promote prejudice and to disenfranchise Muslims, we declare...

THE PEOPLE OF MINDANAO VOTED.
THEIR VOTES MUST BE COUNTED.

To claims that no voting took place in Maguindanao, our prominent brother, Congressman and former Justice Secretary Simeon Datumanong said, "I was even interviewed by Manila-based media before and after I voted."

Consider, too, the following:

- Foreign election observers traveled all over Maguindanao. No major complaints were raised by them regarding the conduct of elections.
- Team Unity's 12-0 sweep of Maguindanao is not improbable since the opposition had no leaders there, no fielded candidates, and mounted no campaign on the ground. Rep. Datumanong points out, "I have been in politics since 1963. You cannot get the Maguindanao votes unless you make yourself visible in that area which the GO did not."
- Administration candidates were unopposed, from governor and provincial board members, to mayor and councilors in 20 of Maguindanao's 22 municipalities. They thus had the time to campaign for Team Unity's senatorial slate.

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ADVT

RP-Aussie war games expected

By Christine O. Avendaño

THE PHILIPPINES HOPES TO HOLD JOINT military exercises with Australia by next year as the two countries are set to sign a new security deal during the visit there by President Macapagal-Arroyo, defense official said yesterday.

The status of forces agreement (Sofa), a security arrangement that covers the conduct and behavior of visiting troops during joint military exercises, will allow Australian troops to hold antiterrorism exercises in the Philippines' troubled south.

Defense Undersecretary Antonio Santos said it might be possible to hold the joint exercises as early as next year, although he said everything would depend "on how fast Congress acts on this."

The Senate has to ratify the agreement that defense officials of the two nations will be signing during Ms Arroyo's Australian visit that starts today.

Visiting Australian Assistant Secretary Ben Coleman said that it was still too early to say where the joint exercises would be held.

Final say

"We don't yet have exercises...so it's premature to speculate the data of such a scenario and the locations," Coleman told reporters.

After the agreement is signed, he said it would go to the Australian Parliament for "scrutiny" and then to Australia's Executive Council, which will have the final say over the Sofa.

Santos explained that the Sofa "regulates the entry and exit of troops coming to exercise here so ...it also gives equal protection to both sides."

He said the increasing number of Filipino officers and men who now go to Australia for training are extended the same protection by the agreement.

Australia will give the Philippines at least 28 small aluminum-hulled boats within the year to help fight Moro and communist rebels, according to a defense department official.

The river boats, equipped with GPS (global position system) and radios, will be given to Army commandos to patrol shallow marshlands in the south, where suspected Muslim guerrillas are hiding.

Boost to Army

"This equipment will definitely boost the capability of the Army," Maria Joji Aragon, assistant defense secretary for strategic assessment, told reporters at the end of two days of bilateral talks between Philippine and Australian defense officials at the Camp Aguinaldo military headquarters.

The boats, worth $4 million, will be delivered late in 2007 and could also be used in shallow rivers in other parts of the country, where communist rebels have strong presence.

Aragon said Australia has also agreed to pay for hundreds of Filipino soldiers attending advanced training and education at Australian war colleges and military institutions, allocating an annual budget of A$4 million ($3.2 million) for the program.

"The money would also be used for post-graduate courses on defense management for some of Filipino generals and colonels," Aragon said, adding Australia was already the largest source of military training and education.

The Philippines is getting about $3 million a year in terms of Army education and training funds from the United States, its close security partner and former colonial master.

Since 2000, when US troops returned to the Philippines to hold drills, Washington.has already poured over $500 million to the local military, mostly in second-hand helicopters, patrol boats and trucks.

Over the past four years, Australia has allocated nearly $130 million in regional counter-terrorism assistance after a series of deadly bombings in Indonesia and the Philippines by Islamic militants linked to the al-Qaida and Jemaah Islamiyah international and regional terror networks.

Australia has been expanding security cooperation with some Southeast Asian sates to prevent the Jemaah Islamiyah from carrying out bombings in the region. *With Reuters*

Bagatsing backs move for new House leaders

By Norman Bordadora

BAGATSING

A NEWLY ELECTED CONGRESSMAN FROM one of Manila's political clans yesterday supported ongoing moves to change the leadership in the House of Representatives and give the lower chamber a new image before the public.

Manila Representative-elect Amado Bagatsing, a former three-term congressman, said the House had one of the lowest trust ratings under the leadership of Speaker Jose De Venecia.

"We must change this image of the House as composed mainly of traditional politicians," Bagatsing said in a statement.

"Instead we should provide the public with proof that the new House will strike in a new fresh direction to tackle the new problems facing the country, instead of being shackled by past conflicts such as those arising from the Charter change proposal. What we need right now is chamber change," he added.

Bagatsing, a stalwart of the Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi), is supporting the speakership bid of Cebu Rep. Pablo Garcia.

Healing wounds

He said many congressmen elected in the last elections want to "take new steps in the right direction to heal the nation's wounds and craft legislation that would put the country on the road to national unity and progress."

"It is time we move forward by electing a new leadership of the House that would throw overboard the heavy debris of division and recriminations in the lower chamber and convert it into an effective and forward-looking people's assembly," Bagatsing said.

Bagatsing said that among the reforms that should be introduced in the House is the distribution of committee chairmanships and memberships.

"The appointment of committee chairmen and vice chairman should be based largely on merit and qualification rather than on seniority alone," said Bagatsing.

"What is important is that the committees should be made to work properly and efficiently on their assigned tasks and not flounder and become practically useless because of inept leadership," he added.

GMA to decide

In Auckland, New Zealand, a Lakas official said that President Macapagal-Arroyo would ultimately decide on the fate of De Venecia, her longtime ally.

Lakas-CMD spokesperson Heherson Alvarez, who is accompanying President Arroyo in her state visits to New Zealand and Australia, said the President has to resolve the leadership issue that has now polarized her key allies in the House.

"The final word of course may come from the President," said Alvarez.

But Garcia, who is being touted by some members of Kampi as the next Speaker, believes President Arroyo will not intervene. Kampi is Ms Arroyo's party.

Alvarez said the move is futile as the ruling party Lakas has the numbers and the clout.

Kampi managed to have 40 members elected to the House in the May 14 polls compared to 92 congressmen for Lakas.

Alvarez said it was unlikely that Ms Arroyo "will just let free democratic play happen in the House," the only chamber that can block any attempt to impeach her.

He hinted that the speakership row could have ramifications on the possible third impeachment attempt by the new House minority.

"It may not be dangerous but definitely disruptive," said Alvarez of Kampi's challenge to de Venecia's continued hold on power in the House.

With a report from Michael Lim Ubac

Thousands still homeless in Bicol

By Volt Contreras

AS A NEW SCHOOL YEAR OPENS NEXT month, close to a thousand families or about 5,000 people are still temporarily sheltered in classrooms in the Bicol region, almost seven months after it was ravaged by super typhoon "Reming."

From a peak of 6,637 evacuated families, there are 989 families mostly from Albay still awaiting relocation after their former communities have been declared by authorities as danger zones, Social Welfare Secretary Esperanza Cabral told the INQUIRER yesterday.

Cabral pinned the delay on the still unreleased share of the Department of Social Welfare and Development in the P8 billion rehabilitation fund appropriated by Congress for Reming-affected provinces under the 2007 national budget.

The DSWD is supposed to get P750 million out of the fund, half of which will go to the construction of basic housing units or core shelters, while the other half has been earmarked for livelihood programs for the evacuees, she said.

The department has only managed to start building at least 1,000 core shelters in three sites in Albay—Anislag, Taysan, and Sto. Domingo—using private cash donations for Reming victims amounting to P6 million, Cabral reported.

Also, she said armed clashes between military and Moro combatants and political violence during the election period in Sulu has forced some 2,492 families to seek safety in at least nine schools.

The DSWD considers them evacuees although most of these families "return to their villages and go about their usual livelihood at daytime and only use the schools for shelter at night," she said.

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GMA warned fraud to spark 'Hello Garci' crisis

From page A1

audit of the election results in Negros Oriental province, which showed that discrepancies in the Comelec and Namfrel tallies tended to favor Team Unity senatorial candidates.

GO front-runners Loren Legarda and Panfilo Lacson said they would continue to lend their support to fellow GO candidates Antonio Trillanes IV and Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III, who are in the 11th and 12th places, respectively, in the official Comelec count.

Voice of the people

The GO candidates challenged President Macapagal-Arroyo and the TU ticket to "respect the voice of the people and refrain from frustrating their senatorial choices," or else another "Hello Garci" political crisis might erupt.

In mid-2005 to early 2006, Ms Arroyo's presidency was nearly undone by calls for her resignation triggered by the "Hello Garci" tapes, which suggested that she had stolen the 2004 presidential election.

"Tampering with the senatorial votes to fabricate results unacceptable to the people will most certainly reignite the issue of this administration's legitimacy and bring society to a more intense sense of political crisis and instability," the GO candidates said.

They also condemned alleged cases of vote-shaving and -padding *(dagdag-bawas)* against opposition candidates that, they said, were "being merely dismissed as an 'honest mistake' or 'clerical error' without any thorough investigation."

They particularly objected to the inclusion in the national canvass of the results from Maguindanao province, where all 12 TU candidates reportedly won, while 19 candidates, including six from the GO ticket, got zero votes.

They said that these "results" were fabricated, and that "no actual election occurred" in Maguindanao.

Election sabotage

Pimentel yesterday also announced he would file charges of election sabotage against the three-member provincial board of canvassers of North Cotabato and South Cotabato for purportedly padding the votes of the 13th-ranked candidate, the TU's Juan Miguel Zubiri, at his expense.

According to Pimentel, election documents showed that Zubiri, whom he would not name at first, benefited by around 240,000 votes from the two provinces while his votes were shaved by around 45,000.

The North Cotabato and South Cotabato certificates of canvass have been set aside in the meantime.

Aside from Pimentel's case, GO lawyers will also go after other Comelec officials caught holding tampered election results, said Makati Mayor and GO convenor Jejomar Binay.

"We won't back down. All those who sabotaged the elections, we will surely sue them, including Comelec regional directors. They better watch out. We'll file the necessary criminal charges against them," said Binay, who has won reelection in Makati.

10 provinces

Halal audited the results of 10 provinces, and found "close agreement" in the tallies of Comelec and Namfrel in all, except in Negros Oriental.

It compared each candidate's percentage share of the total votes in the Comelec tally with his/her percentage share of the votes in the Namfrel tally, and arrived at the discrepancy by computing the difference.

Ideally, a candidate's percentage share of the votes in both Comelec and Namfrel tallies should be the same because these are based on the same election returns (ERs), Halal convenor Roberto Verzola said at a briefing.

But in its audit, Halal found discrepancies. It also found that some candidates gained votes and the rest lost votes in the Comelec tally.

The top gainers were Vicente Sotto III, Michael Defensor, Ralph Recto, Joker Arroyo, Zubiri, Prospero Pichay, Luis Singson, Tessie Aquino-Oreta, Francis Pangilinan, Jamalul Kiram, Edgardo Angara and Cesar Montano. All are TU candidates except for Pangilinan, who is an independent.

The top losers were John Osmeña, Pimentel, Gregorio Honasan, Trillanes, Lacson, Benigno Aquino III, Alan Peter Cayetano, Francis Escudero, Legarda, Sonia Roco, Manuel Villar Jr. and Melchor Chavez. All, except for independent Honasan and KBL Chavez, are GO candidates.

'Look deeper'

"Halal emphasizes that the discrepancies do not automatically mean cheating by the candidates who apparently gained votes from the discrepancies. Neither do we say that no cheating occurred," Verzola said.

However, he stressed, Halal wanted to call attention to the discrepancies so these could be investigated and so the tallies could be reconciled.

"There's a bit of consistency that calls attention for us to look deeper," he said, referring to administration candidates in the gainers' row.

If anything, the initial assessment should prod other watchdog groups and the public to put Negros Oriental on their watch list as Namfrel "completes its count," Verzola said.

For the province, Halal based its audit on the Comelec's complete tally of the votes, and Namfrel's tally (Batch 34), which was only 33.4 percent complete.

Since one tally was incomplete, Halal decided to compare the percentage share of the total votes of each candidate, instead of the total votes.

It computed the percentage share of the vote by dividing a candidate's votes over the total votes in either the Namfrel or Comelec tally.

"I can't make a determination as to how extensive the cheating has taken place in favor of one party or the other. These are just initial findings," former Sen. Wigberto Tañada, Halal chair, said at the same briefing.

Halal said it would release another audit when Namfrel wraps up its count.

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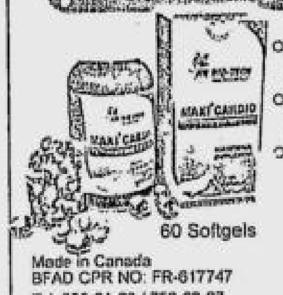

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TU's 2 contrary reactions make it . . .

From page A1

Philippines the laughingstock of the world, according to the coalition's lead counsel, Romulo Macalintal.

Reacting to earlier statements made by TU deputy spokesperson Tonypet Albano, Macalintal said the administration team had no intention of filing a petition to invalidate the elections in areas that proved to be opposition bailiwicks.

"I don't think that's a proper remedy because if you file a petition for a failure of elections in Metro Manila, we would be the laughingstock of the whole world," Macalintal told reporters yesterday.

"It's the individual lawyers of the candidates who will file motions for retabulation, but it's not true that we're going to file a motion for a failure of elections," the lawyer stressed.

Retabulation only

In a press conference on Monday, Albano said the TU was going to seek a recount of the votes in Metro Manila and the 15 provinces where candidates of the Genuine Opposition (GO) prevailed.

GO candidates have dominated the poll results since the National Board of Canvassers began collating vote tallies from around the country and from Philippine missions overseas.

Saying the coalition was just availing itself of the same relief that the GO had sought in questioning the canvass results in Maguindanao and South Cotabato, among other provinces, Albano had said the recanvassing, if granted, could lead to a declaration of a failure of elections in the TU's questioned areas.

But Macalintal said the case was not necessarily so. As far as he knew, the TU would seek a "recanvassing or retabulation" in selected precincts in certain cities and provinces, but not a recount in entire areas.

'In cahoots with opposition'

Eastern Samar Gov. Ben Evardone, TU media bureau chief and campaign strategist, said the party came across over 100 cases of electoral fraud in Metro Manila and other places where the GO candidates had won by large margins. These incidents were overlooked or ignored by poll watchdogs, he said.

The failure or refusal of these watchdogs to cry fraud when they did so in proadministration bailiwicks only fueled suspicions that they were in cahoots with the opposition to vilify the May 14 elections, Evardone said.

He also accused the GO of being in cahoots with leftist and ultrarightist elements in raising charges of fraud against TU senatorial candidates.

Sleeping watchdogs

"We challenge these election watch organizations to likewise monitor and train their sights on these well-documented cases of poll fraud in over a hundred GO bailiwicks that TU lawyers are soon going to file before the Comelec (Commission on Elections)," Evardone said.

"Unlike the unsubstantiated complaints filed by the opposition, these complaints will be backed by testimonies from real witnesses and material evidence like questionable ballots or entries," he said.

Evardone cited the results in Maguindanao where TU candidates scored a clean sweep but which the GO wanted nullified.

Mind-conditioning

According to Evardone, the GO had prematurely claimed that eight of its candidates would win although the Comelec had yet to tally certificates of canvass (CoCs) covering some six million votes.

He said this was part of the GO's strategy to condition the minds of the people to accept an 8-2-2 win in favor of the opposition.

"The opposition could also be laying the groundwork for destabilization moves against the government as soon as the national canvassing is over," he said.

120 cases filed

President Macapagal-Arroyo has advised her handpicked senatorial candidates to "exhaust all legal means" to barge into the Magic 12.

TU candidates Ralph Recto, Miguel Zubiri and Prospero "Butch" Pichay have responded in kind by inundating the Comelec with hundreds of cases.

In a phone interview with the INQUIRER, TU campaign manager Reli German said the filing of 120 cases by the lawyers of Recto, Zubiri and Pichay (who are within striking distance of the top 12 slots based on the Comelec tally) to "recall, recompute, recanvass and exclude all canvassed votes areas where the TU got only one senator in the top 12" had the blessing of the President.

"She just told the candidates to exhaust all legal means necessary to win. The candidates heeded her advice and exercised their right to file an appeal for a recount," said German, when asked the President's view on the recount that could potentially hold up the proclamation of the winners.

A Malacañang source said the President had relayed her message in a conference call during a brief meeting between the TU brain trust at the Palace on Saturday evening. Recto and Michael Defensor were reportedly present.

Lucky No. 12

German said the winners of the senatorial elections were far from set as the TU's complaints could affect "two to three million votes" on top of the five million votes that had yet to be counted by the Comelec.

Zubiri is currently in a close fight with GO candidate Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III for the 12th spot. Recto, Pichay and Defensor are trailing closely behind them.

German could not explain why the lawyers of Defensor did not file a case as those of the lawyers of Zubiri, Recto a

d Pichay had done, but he said the outcome of their cases could potentially carry Defensor into the Magic 12 where only two TU candidates—Edgardo Angara and Joker Arroyo—are currently included.

Defensor did not respond to the INQUIRER's calls.

But GO candidate Sen. Panfilo Lacson, who has been holding steady at No. 3 in the top 12, laughed off the TU's attempt to delay the "inevitable win" of the opposition.

"If the TU had its way, to have a recount and delay the proclamation, the country would really be in the pits," said Lacson.

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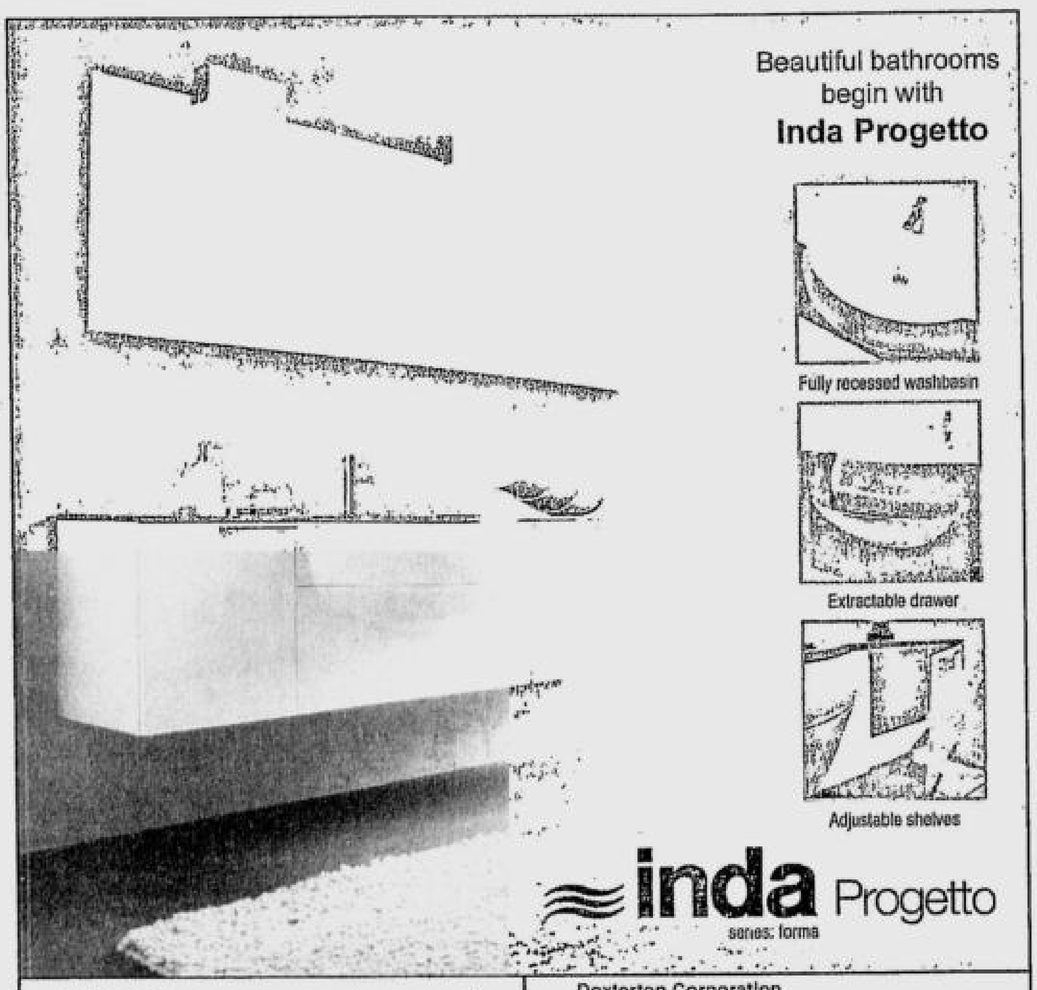

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Lacson: Sarmiento should quit Comelec

From page A1

Sarmiento to resign from the Comelec altogether for supposedly letting poll violations take place "right under his nose" during the Lanao del Sur special elections.

Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay said Sarmiento virtually admitted his failure to supervise the Lanao polls by giving up as head of Task Force Maguindanao.

Neither Lacson nor Binay bought Sarmiento's reason for quitting the task force—his health.

Lacson and Binay referred to the ANC news network's video footage showing blank election returns being brought to a hotel in Iligan City before the Lanao voting last weekend and to a subsequent TV interview with Sarmiento justifying the transfer of the election returns (ERs).

Under Comelec rules, blank ERs and other documents are to be stored in the provincial treasurer's office for safekeeping.

Highly esteemed

"I used to hold Rene Sarmiento in high esteem until I saw him standing up for Comelec officials in Lanao who clearly violated the rules of the Comelec," Lacson said.

"He can't unilaterally order the transfer of blank ERs from the treasurer's office to a hotel. That's a clear violation and for a Comelec commissioner who is right there, that violation is being committed right under his nose and he even had the gall to stand up for these erring officials," Lacson said.

In his interview with the INQUIRER, Sarmiento pointed out that ANC reporter Ricky Carandang failed to get the whole story on the ERs and that he had even insinuated that they were to be used for cheating.

Sarmiento said the ERs were brought to the hotel for safekeeping after Jubil Sumidea, a Comelec special action officer, learned that there was no municipal treasurer in Marawi to receive the forms from the provincial treasurer.

"It was already late, and there were occasional brownouts. If he (Sumidea) left the ERs behind, they could get lost. That's why the ERs were brought to the hotel where all the Comelec personnel were staying," Sarmiento said.

He added: "There was nothing fraudulent about the ERs ... my staff even slept beside (them) to make sure they wouldn't get lost."

Main job

As head of the task force, Sarmiento's main job was to look into allegations of widespread cheating in Maguindanao during the May 14 elections.

The allegations were spurred by a public school teacher's statement that she and other teachers were forced at gunpoint to fill out ballots to ensure a 12-0 win in the province by the candidates of Team Unity (TU).

Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. vouched for Sarmiento's "independence" and said the Comelec's youngest commissioner would not bow to any pressure.

"I don't think he is one man that could be pressured by anybody."

Abalos said he spoke with Sarmiento on the phone and the latter told him, in Filipino: "Chair, it's not that I am turning my back on my duties ... I have fallen ill."

Abalos also quoted Sarmiento as saying: "I cannot proceed to Maguindanao now and conduct an investigation *dahil sa may sakit na ako* (because I am ill) and I'm too tense and too pressured." "*May lagnat na raw siya* (he already had a fever)," Abalos said.

Sarmiento was replaced in the task force by Commissioner Nicodemo Ferrer.

Civil society's 'fans'

Also yesterday, the perfumed set from civil society pulled off a protest right inside the Philippine International Convention Center, where the Comelec is holding its canvass.

In their dapper designer clothes, the roughly 20 anti-poll fraud members flashed cardboard fans showing President Macapagal-Arroyo flanked by Abalos and controversial former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano, each of them carrying long firearms.

The fans bore the slogan: "Election terrorists!" Dizon said the fans were to show how Ms Arroyo and Abalos were "inspired by Garcillano" to rig the recent elections. *With a report from Dona Pazzibugan*

Judge suspended for slow work; another fined for foul language

By Leila B. Salaverria

SAYING IT HAD TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC trust in the judiciary, the Supreme Court has suspended one Negros Occidental judge and imposed a fine on another for delays in handing out decisions.

The high tribunal also fined and reprimanded a third judge for using unsavory language and cursing at and embarrassing people, which it said was "conduct unbecoming a member of the judiciary."

It also sanctioned five court personnel for various offenses.

Judge Henry Trocino of Bago, Negros Occidental, was suspended for three months for the undue delay in handing down decisions, and for lying about the amount of work that he had done.

An audit team from the Office of the Court Administrator found that Trocino failed to decide on 71 cases submitted for decision in July 2003. Of the 71 cases, 33 were found to be still unresolved during a second audit in July 2004.

The OCA also found that Trocino had stated in the monthly certificates of service that he had filed from November 2004 to February 2005, that he had already decided all special proceedings, civil and criminal cases and other pleadings that were submitted for decision for 90 days or more.

Judge Edgardo Catilo, also of Bago, was fined P20,000, also for his delay in resolving cases. The high court found that Catilo failed to decide on 50 cases in a July 2003 audit. A July 2005 audit found that 43 of these cases remained unresolved.

Judge Francisco Gedorio, Jr. of Ormoc, Leyte, was fined P5,000 and reprimanded for his behavior, that included calling people "*animal*" and "*bakla*" (fag) and shouting invectives at staff members.

"We are convinced that respondent's actuations in the premises constitute conduct unbecoming a judge. We have held that a judge, even on the face of boorish behavior from those he deals with, ought to conduct himself in a manner befitting a gentleman and a high officer of the court," the high court said.

"It bears stressing that as a dispenser of justice, respondent should exercise judicial temperament at all times, avoiding vulgar and insulting language. He must maintain composure and equanimity," it said.

A judge's improper behavior serves to erode the people's confidence in the judiciary, the high court said.

The Supreme Court also imposed month-long suspensions without salary and benefits on stenographers Emezer Arellano and Evelyn Montoyo, staff members of Trocino's sala, for failing to transcribe their stenographic notes in 97 cases.

Sheriff Silvino Malana of a Tuguegarao City regional trial court was also suspended for one month and one day for his failure to fully implement the writ of execution in a civil case. He was warned that he would receive more severe sanctions if he repeats the offense.

Bataan RTC sheriff Charlie Gatbunton was fined P10,000 for gross ignorance of the law for conducting an auction of a mortgaged property without publishing a new Notice of Sheriff's Sale with the new auction date.

Bago clerk of court Josephine Mutia-Haggad was fined P5,000 for simple neglect of duty for failing to supervise court employees.

RP seaman's kidnapping in Nigeria confirmed

THE PHILIPPINES confirmed yesterday that a Filipino seaman was among a group of expatriates kidnapped by gunmen in Nigeria last week.

The Philippine mission in Abuja reported the Filipino, whose identity was not disclosed, was seized along with four Britons, three Americans, a South African and a Nigerian from the offshore construction barge where they were working.

The Philippines banned Filipinos from travelling for work to Nigeria earlier this year after 25 workers were abducted in separate incidents. Eight other Filipinos were abducted on May 1.

All those hostages were later freed unharmed.

The ban did not apply to the estimated 4,500 Filipinos who were already working in Nigeria. *AFP*

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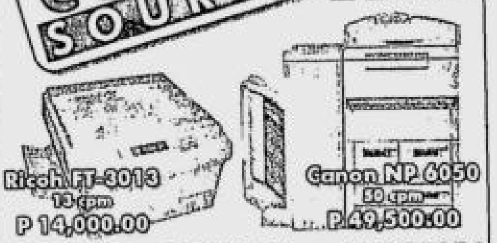

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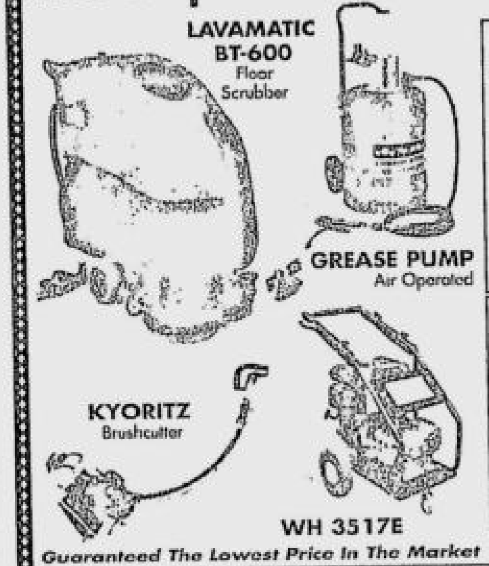

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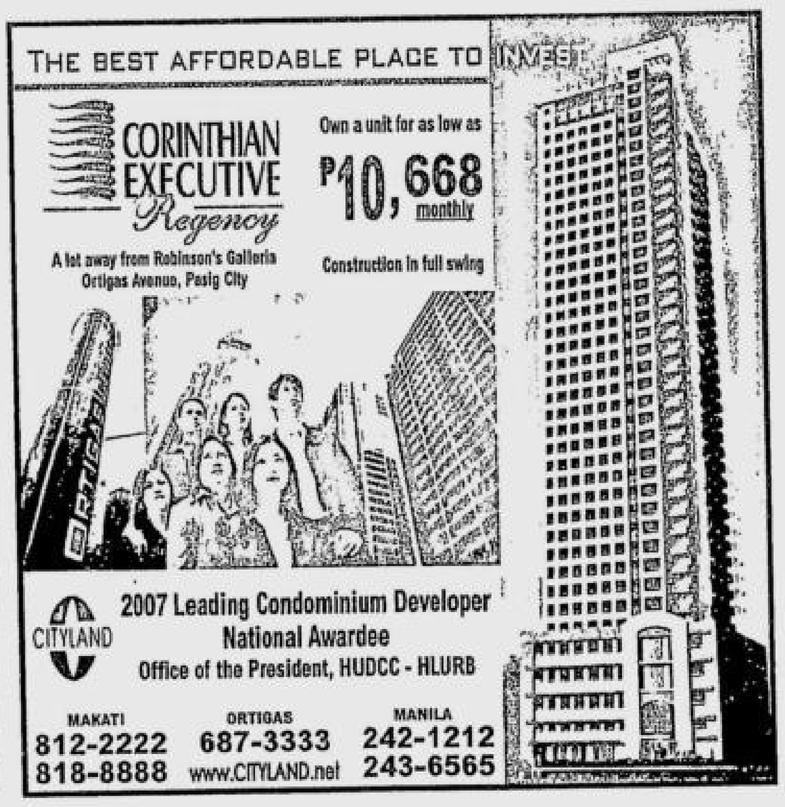

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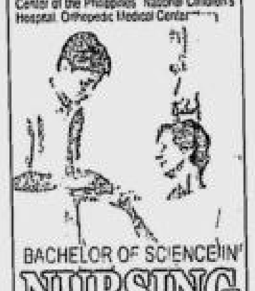

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Davao City keeps it 8-2-2 for GO candidates

From page A1

down" in the national canvassing but the lack of submitted CoCs that left the NBC with nothing to tabulate yesterday, except for the CoCs from Davao City.

"Slowing down is different from having nothing to canvass," Abalos said, explaining that a "slowdown" referred to stopping the canvass with CoCs left to tabulate.

"We had nothing to canvass, that is why we had to adjourn," he said at a press conference following the NBC's adjournment.

In the Davao City tally, Francis "Chiz" Escudero (GO) beat Loren Legarda (GO) by 15,969 votes. But overall, Legarda remained at No. 1, ahead of Escudero by 128,424 votes.

Panfilo Lacson (GO) stayed at No. 3 and Manuel Villar (GO) at No. 4. But in the Davao tally, Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III won more votes than Villar.

The 218,579 votes garnered by independent candidate Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan from Davao City strengthened his hold on the fifth spot.

Pimentel (GO), who placed sixth in the city—two slots ahead of Miguel Zubiri of the administration's TU—was ahead of the latter by 60,869 votes in the overall tally.

TU candidates Edgardo Angara and Joker Arroyo, who placed 11th and 12th, respectively, in the Davao tally, remained in the seventh and eighth slots.

Alan Peter Cayetano was still at No. 9 and independent candidate Gregorio Honasan at No. 10. Antonio Trillanes IV managed to hang on to the 11th spot.

So far, the NBC has finished canvassing 79 CoCs from the provinces and 13 from Metro Manila.

Padded Defensor votes?

The vote tallies from Davao del Sur were scheduled to be read out yesterday but the board decided to defer it after Leila de Lima, a lawyer of Cayetano, noted the votes earned by the TU's Michael Defensor to be "very suspicious."

Based on the GO copy of the Davao del Sur tally, Defensor earned 82,504 votes but the CoC and statement of votes presented to the board showed that he earned 102,504 votes, De Lima said.

Abalos acknowledged the snail-paced canvassing at the provincial and city level but explained that this was because of the "procedure" and "technicalities" raised by election lawyers.

Appeals

"(The provincial canvassing) is taking a long time because of the questions and procedures (to be followed) that include appeals (brought up to the Comelec). Then we still have to rule on the appeal," Abalos said.

He said that the most the commission could do was to "instruct" the provincial and city boards of canvassers to speed things up.

Abalos earlier projected a 10-day canvassing period, as what the Comelec did in the 2004 national elections.

But this year, the NBC reached its 13th day of tabulation but several controversial CoCs have yet to be tallied.

Since convening on May 16, two days after Election Day, the NBC has taken only a one-day break on May 27.

CoCs under investigation

Some of these CoCs, including the one from Maguindanao, Abalos noted, were the subject of a Comelec investigation.

He said that among the CoCs still being questioned were those from North Cotabato, Sulu and South Cotabato.

Abalos noted that the canvassing was not yet finished in Basilan and in Lanao del Sur, where special elections were held in 13 towns over the weekend.

He said insinuations that CoC results were still being manufactured at the provincial level, which was why they have yet to be sent to the NBC, were products of "dirty minds."

In fact, he said, the poll body had ordered an investigation of a TV report that Comelec personnel were allegedly making alterations in the CoC for Sulop, Davao del Sur.

GO for partial proclamation

GO lawyer Sixto Brillantes did not appear bothered by the slowing down in the national canvassing, and in fact agreed with Abalos' explanation.

"You should understand that the commissioners are slowing it down because they are making sure that the results (are in order) because this is preparatory to a partial proclamation in the next few days," Brillantes told reporters.

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Rally ...

From page A1

could not shake off the colonial bias that "only a dead Moro is a good Moro."

Power of command vote

Allegations of widespread cheating have delayed the Commission on Elections tabulation of the election results in Maguindanao.

An unidentified Maguindanao public school teacher had claimed no voting took place in her school and that she and other teachers were the ones who, at gunpoint, actually filled out the ballots to ensure a 12-0 TU sweep.

This was denied by Maguindanao officials, who said the TU victory in the province only showed the power of the command vote—that is, people voting according to the dictates of their leaders.

Maguindanao Gov. Datu Andal Ampatuan said the residents had relayed their desire to show to the rest of the country how consultations formed part of their decision-making, such as in their choice of leaders.

Provincial administrator Norie Unas said those doubting the result of the elections should examine how the Moro culture works.

Unas said Ampatuan had conducted consultations before the elections and the outcome of these was what the voters adopted.

Always the victim

Bai Lydia Piang, chair of the Sigay ng Mga Ina sa Maguindanao (Mothers' Light of Maguindanao), said her fellow Muslim mothers were worried about what their children saw on television newscasts, which dealt with alleged cheating in Muslim areas.

Sulaiman, a Muslim scholar, said he believed the controversy over electoral fraud "systematically stereotyped the Muslims anew."

This was despite the fact that cases of fraud and even bloodier elections had also been reported elsewhere in the country, Sulaiman said.

"The fact that we have always become the ultimate victim ... indicates that the public or the media, being the shaper of public opinion, aren't yet convinced that we, as a people, are ready for reforms," he said.

He said the allegations made by the faceless, anonymous teacher had only fueled such misimpression.

Van filled with ERs

Rep. Simeon Datumanong, who disputed the allegations that no voting took place in Maguindanao by saying that he was among those who voted early, said that none of the election inspectors or provincial canvassers were under the employ of any politician and claims that ballot boxes were filled at gunpoint were "simply unbelievable."

Reports of more election irregularities in connection with the special elections in Lanao del Sur—located, like Maguindanao, in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao—flew yesterday.

An official of the watchdog Legal Network for Truthful Elections (Lente) told the INQUIRER of how teachers flagrantly violated the rules on vote tallying, how a speeding van full of election returns sped away from a polling center, and how the counting of votes continued in a brownout-plagued basketball gym.

Lente convenor Carlos Medina said teachers tallying votes in a precinct in Masiu town refused to simultaneously put down in the tally sheet and on the election returns the votes being read by the board of election inspectors as required by law.

Instead, Medina said, teachers would first complete the tally sheets before recording the results in the ERs.

"Normally, as the (votes) are counted, these are recorded in the tally sheet and written in the ER at the same time. But here in Masiu, the votes are recorded first in the tally sheet and then recorded in the ER," he said.

Masiu was the same town where heads of the National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) and the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV) observed a "noisy and chaotic" election on Saturday.

Comelec helpless?

Medina warned that if not properly monitored, anyone filling out an ER could easily pad or alter the results reflected on the board.

Confronting the teachers, Medina said he was told that they were only "following orders from local (Comelec) officers."

"The teachers said they have their own Comelec ... and that they cannot be forced to adhere to orders from the national office," Medina said in a telephone interview.

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Playing with fire

EDITORIAL

TO PUT IT BLUNTLY, WHEN EVIDENCE OF FRAUD "pours like rain" in a province like Lanao del Sur, the only people who are surprised by it are the electoral watchdogs like Namfrel and the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting. For the politicians, their supporters and the public, it's nothing more or less than the usual. As a respected academic told us, electoral fraud in Muslim Mindanao sadly only serves to underscore the inherent biases, even prejudice, of Christian Filipinos toward their Muslim fellow citizens. This sad, and harsh, reality means that the question becomes one of political will for our institutions: with cheating exposed, should the controversial vote in certain provinces still count?

In the case of Maguindanao, the voting was so discredited, that it will be difficult, (though not impossible, for this Commission on Elections at least) to end up crediting the so-called votes in that province to the national senatorial tally. And this has Team Unity, the sole beneficiary of the discredited Maguindanao vote, up in arms. After all, if public scrutiny—from election watchdogs and the media—resulted in a crucial chunk of 300,000 votes being taken out of play, the same thorough scrutiny has put the Lanao vote in peril, too. And Team Unity is running out of places from which to eke out a victory for its candidates who haven't made it to the "Magic 12."

Tonypet Albano, TU's deputy spokesman, says that if the administration candidates can't have additional victories, nobody will. "We're just doing to them what they are doing to us," Albano protested with the petulance of a spoiled child. "They [the opposition] are questioning how we swept Maguindanao. So we will also question them how they swept us in their bailiwicks, like Makati and General Santos City." He says Romulo Macalintal, President Macapagal-Arroyo's election lawyer (and Team Unity's, too), has been directed to seek a re-canvassing of votes in perceived GO bailiwicks. A "failure of election" might even be declared in those areas, he adds hopefully.

It's not certain if General Santos City remains a target for a TU-initiated recount, but Albano specifically named Makati, San Juan, Caloocan and Pasig as places where it will demand a re-tabulation of the certificates of canvass. Is the best defense a good offense in politics, like it is in basketball? Perhaps, but Team Unity is embarking on an extremely dangerous course, one that threatens to turn a localized election mess into a means to provoke national turmoil.

Our Muslim brothers and sisters have every right to resent being portrayed as cheaters, when the electoral manipulators are Muslim provincial leaders in league with Christian national officials. The ordinary Filipino Muslim trooped to the precincts subject to the same harassment, bribery and intimidation as their Christian counterparts. Their problem is part of a national problem.

But the tragic reality is that centuries of bias afflicts Christian Filipinos who think they're better than their fellow citizens in Muslim Mindanao. In other words, the country has shrugged off scandalous elections in Maguindanao and Sulu and elsewhere, but now, TU is embarking on challenging elections in places whose residents believe they did their civic duty capably and well.

A failure of elections in Makati? San Juan? Caloocan? Pasig? Possibly even General Santos City? What would be next, Manila? Why not the whole of the Visayas and wherever the administration failed to deliver a TU sweep? TU said it would file an appeal for a recount of the votes in Metro Manila and 15 provinces and Macalintal may file up to 130 cases of election fraud with the Comelec against GO, questioning up to seven million votes. This is not merely politics, it's a scorched-earth policy.

Not even Ferdinand Marcos had this audacity: not even he would have had the nerve, or the spite, to play with fire as the administration ticket proposes to do. The public has conceded Cebu to the administration as a bailiwick. The shocker in this election has been that all the other bailiwicks the administration claimed have ended up fictitious. And now it demands that the national verdict, delivered in province after province where TU went down in defeat, be declared as fictitious, too.

Those whom the gods wish to destroy, they first make mad.

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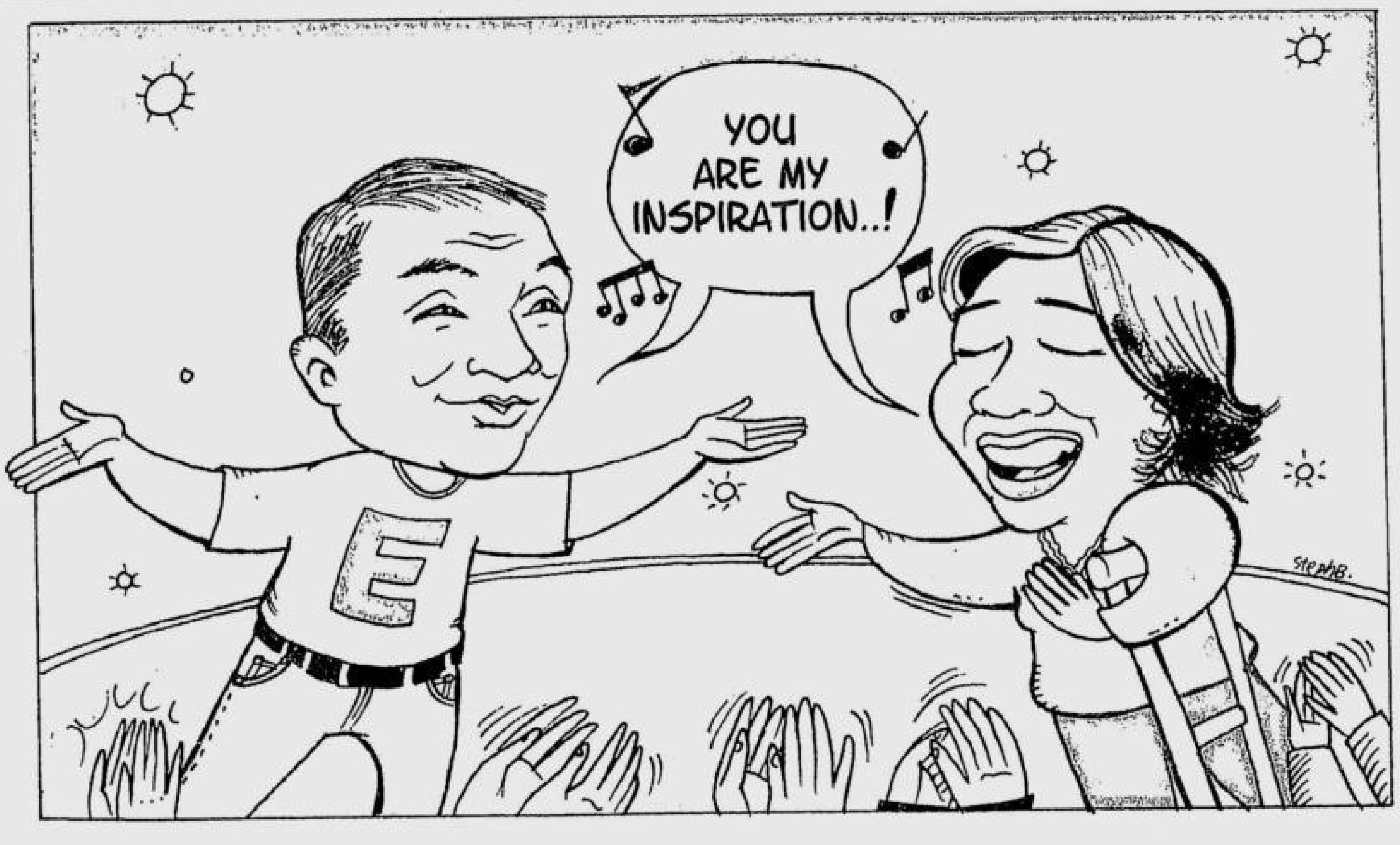

More reforms Comelec should make

(*Continued from last Monday*)

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

ANOTHER PRIORITY THAT THE COMMISSION on Elections should attend to is the disqualification of nuisance candidates. It is not difficult to recognize nuisance candidates. They are the candidates who cannot wage a national campaign, such as in a senatorial election which can cost a candidate hundreds of millions of pesos, or those who have the same name as a better-known and more credible candidate. The purpose of the nuisance candidate is to spoil the chances of the other candidate. With two candidates with the same surname, votes for that surname without any first name are considered "stray" and are not counted. Thus, the candidates lose many votes that way.

Of course, candidates who are adversely affected are quick to file disqualification cases. Because of the limited campaign period, and the time it takes to disseminate Comelec decisions and instructions to employees in the field, it is imperative for the Comelec to resolve these disqualification cases quickly.

But as in the resolution of election protests, the Comelec is very lackadaisical in deciding disqualification cases. Thus, the affected candidate loses precious time.

Take the case of Alan Peter Cayetano and Joselito "Peter" Cayetano. Anybody with a modicum of common sense can readily see that Joselito is a nuisance candidate. He is a poor worker who lives in a small house in a rural area. It is obvious he cannot wage a national campaign for senator. Even his relatives were amazed at his candidacy. And his nickname is not "Peter" but "Jojo." It is obvious that he was persuaded to file his certificate of candidacy and use the nickname "Peter" to hew as close as possible to the name of Alan Peter Cayetano. The Comelec eventually found him a nuisance candidate and disqualified him. But when did it promulgate its decision? One day before the elections.

Then the Comelec said it could not remove his name from the list of candidates because the decision had not yet become final. Joselito had five days to appeal to the Supreme Court, which he did. Until now, the Supreme Court has not decided the case although anybody else except the justices can readily see who is the nuisance candidate—and the elections are already over.

To make matters worse, the Department of Education circulated instructions to teachers to consider all votes for "Cayetano" (with no first name) as "stray" and not count them. Ordinarily, these votes were set aside and then counted later in favor of whoever wins the disqualification case. But with the DepEd order, the Cayetano votes were not counted and forever lost, and can no longer be counted for Alan Peter even if he wins the case in the Supreme Court.

So you see, by delaying its decision on the disqualification case, it was as if the Comelec decided in favor of Joselito, or whoever his backers are. The purpose of his nuisance candidacy was achieved: to deny votes to Alan Peter Cayetano.

Luckily, Alan garnered enough votes to land in the Magic 12 despite the votes denied him. But what if he landed in the 10th or 11th place, like Antonio Trillanes and Koko Pimentel, when only a few hundred votes can spell the difference between winning and losing?

Luckily for the Comelec officials (and Supreme Court justices), there is no law that punishes this kind of behavior. Otherwise they would all go to jail or be made to pay fines and damages to Alan Peter. The Supreme Court has set deadlines for lower courts to decide cases submitted for decision. Cannot similar deadlines be set for the Comelec?

* * *

As for the Presidential Electoral Tribunal, we have seen the case of Loren Legarda. She has filed an election protest against Vice President Noli de Castro, and she has proven in the results opened and examined by the PET so far that indeed there were irregularities in a number of areas. But it has taken three years (half of the six-year vice presidential term) and millions of pesos from her pocket to prove them. It will take more time and more millions to prove other manipulations to show that she actually won the elections. Or perhaps the case will never be decided before the term expires, considering the slowness that the PET is taking to hear it.

As for the House Electoral Tribunal, we have seen so many complainants winning their election protests and being proclaimed congressmen—with only a few days of the term left. They were empty victories. The real winners were the cheats who stole the position and the salaries, allowances and pork barrel that should have gone to the complainants.

* * *

Still another priority is the party-list system. The system is obviously being abused by opportunists, as witness the sudden mushrooming of party-list groups this election.

The party-list system is supposed to give marginalized sectors of society representation in Congress. Unfortunately, the Comelec has not made any criteria to determine what are "marginalized sectors" and how authentic are the names submitted to it for accreditation. Too often, these party-list groups are mere names written on pieces of paper but with no members.

Malacañang has pounced on this loophole to strengthen its hold on the House of Representatives by having more allies elected through the party-list system. Thus, when a motion to file an impeachment case against GMA comes to a vote, there would be more congressmen who would vote "no."

Indeed, when the Supreme Court ordered the Comelec to reveal the nominees of the party-list groups, it was shown that many of the nominees were administration allies and even officials of Malacañang.

I think the Comelec or Congress should formulate rules to prevent this abuse.

Joke, too

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I HAD BEEN WONDERING WHEN JOKER Arroyo would speak out against the abduction and disappearance of Jonas Burgos. In the past (however that past seems more and more remote now), Joker had been a voice that rang thunderously against tyranny and its twin allies, murder and mayhem. I had looked up to him, as to Aquilino Pimentel and their brethren in Mabini and Flag—Ka Pepe Diokno, Tanny Tañada, Bobbit Sanchez and many others—as heaven's very messengers on earth, come to right wrongs and bring God's wrath upon the wicked.

He has finally spoken about Jonas Burgos, but I am at pains to see how those words are coming out from the person I once knew. Joker does not seem bent on living up to his past, he seems bent on living up to his name.

What does the abduction and more than probable "salvaging" of Burgos signify? As Joker sees it, it does not signify the presence of a baleful order that, like martial law, will brook no opposition, whether that opposition comes in the form of the pen or the sword—hell, whether that opposition comes in the form of a farmer helping other farmers to know the seeds of democracy as much as those of agriculture. It does not signify the presence of a malevolent order that, like martial law, will use force and repression, including murder and massacre, to fend off any threat to its existence, real or imagined, and has learned to do so with impunity, liking more and more the taste of blood after having licked it.

As Joker sees it, it signifies nothing more or less than the divisiveness in the military: "(Jonas') abduction has brought to the fore the internal struggle in the uniformed services between the progressive, reform-minded, liberal-thinking officers on the one hand, and the disciples of the mailed-fist, take-no-prisoners, scorched-earth, attritional war of the traditional military establishment.... These have to be harmonized. It is overdue. Advanced countries have long done it.... The lesson of Jonas' abduction is to keep it alive so that it will propel the molding of a humane and useful policy towards reform. If Jonas is gone, he will not have died in vain."

I leave the Burgos family to say their piece on this summation of what their incalculable loss amounts to. I myself am bowled over by it.

Of course, the divisiveness in the military has something to do with it. But even if you look at it from that perspective, the question is: Who the hell created that divisiveness? Or who the hell raised it to such levels that have left the "traditionalists" free to murder and maim, slaughter and "salvage," their enemies?

The divisiveness in the military had been there for a long time. That was the reason Antonio Trillanes and company occupied Oakwood, demanding an end to the humongous corruption there, one that left the foot soldier in Mindanao completely literally fighting on foot—his boots were worn out. But that was nothing compared to the divisiveness that came later, notably after the 2004 elections. That was when GMA punished the "progressive, reform-minded, liberal-thinking officers" for their progressive, reform-minded, libertarian desire to defend the ballot and uphold the sovereign will of the voter. Chief of those officers were Brig. Gen. Francisco Gudani and Col. Alexander Balutan. In this country, merely making sure the right president sits in Malacañang now takes on the aspect of a monumental reform. For wanting to tell the truth about the elections, Gudani and Balutan were detained and court-martialed.

That, too, was when GMA promoted nearly to a man all the shady characters that had figured in the "Hello Garci" scandal. Chief of them Hermogenes Esperon, whose finger now caresses the trigger of the gun aimed at the temple of this nation. The military is divided. It is divided into those who languish in jail out of a desire to end a rule that has spawned, is spawning, and will spawn murder and mayhem to continue ruling, and those who wreak that same murder and mayhem with the blessings, tacit or implicit, active or grudging, of the one person who can impose her will only with a military bent on doing so.

Anyway you slice it, you come back to a tyrannical order whose existence is threatened by the sway of human rights, whose existence precludes the sway of human rights. Or never mind human rights, whose existence is threatened by, and precludes, the existence of journalists and political activists and progressive, reform-minded and liberal thinking souls like Jonas Burgos who are compelled only by the force of what they are to do what is right and just.

For crying out loud, to have the spectacle of someone like Burgos, who has proven himself not the lesser man to his father, dragged away screaming from a busy mall in front of onlookers in the heart of the capital reduced to a defect in the bureaucracy, only a joker would say that. To have someone so young, so bright, so generous with his life and talent, murdered in some desolate spot (it can't be easy holding on to the hope he is still alive after all this time) reduced to a symptom of military dysfunction capable of being corrected by tweaking policy en route to harmonization, that is a cruel joke.

The reason a culture of impunity reigns in this country is also that the human rights lawyers in this country have been reduced to puniness. The reason a culture of death reigns in this country is that its once best and brightest now embrace it as their way of life.

The lesson of Jonas' death is to keep him alive in memory so that he may compel this government to implement more humane and reformist policies?

The lesson of Jonas' life is to keep him alive in memory so that he might end a reign of bane and blight and breathe life into this dying land! Then will he not have died in vain.

GMA heads for hot seat

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

CANBERRA—IT IS WINTER IN AUSTRALIA when President Macapagal-Arroyo arrives in this federal capital today to start a round of talks with Australian leaders during her two-day state visit, with an oversized entourage of nearly 100 Filipino dignitaries and businessmen.

It is not the chill winds she will sail into, as a warm official reception worthy of a full state visit awaits her, but she will be heading for the hot seat. Knives are out to hold her accountable for issues that she has momentarily fled in the Philippines: the death-squad killings in the homeland and the sordid election results and unfolding irregularities in Mindanao in the still uncompleted election count two weeks after the polls. These issues have followed her, and she will not be allowed to forget them here.

The first blast of the hostile climate in the Australian media was fired by the Canberra Times, the capital city newspaper, in an article today (Wednesday) titled, "The Growing Toll of Democracy, Arroyo style: The Philippines' leader has failed to stop rights abuses." The article, written by professor Ben Kerkvliet, director of the Department of Political and Social Change, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, at the Australian National University, said President Arroyo "will be applauded, wined and dined, and Prime Minister John Howard and other national politicians are likely to hail her as a champion of democracy and defender of democracy... Australians should know, however, that since Arroyo took office in 2001, hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Filipinos have disappeared or been murdered for peacefully exercising their democratic rights."

The article further says: "Until a year ago, she scarcely acknowledged the killings ... only in mid-2006 did she appear to do something by creating a police task force to look into the cases... Thus far, however, authorities have filed charges against only a small number of suspects and found only a couple of them guilty, [hence] nearly all of the crimes remain unsolved."

So when Ms Arroyo insists, as she does, on "crushing the communist insurgency" and she links that to the "fight against the Left," she "encourages military commanders, and police officers to mistreat and kill political activists and journalists who criticize the status quo." Ms Arroyo is by no means "the only perpetrator of extra-judicial executions in the Philippines, but she certainly has a lot to answer for."

The climate in the academic community here is no less critical of her human rights record and her economic performance. According to sources in ANU, university authorities have politely brushed aside overtures from the Philippine Embassy to confer on her an honorary doctorate, given that the university administration was embarrassed over the controversy among the academics over the bestowal last March, of an honorary Ph.D. on Singapore's Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew.

The messages that Ms Arroyo brings to Australia ignore her human rights record and focus on the performance of the Philippine economy. The economic issue has no resonance in the Australian media and public. Therefore, it is a wrong focus and accent. Despite all the claims about record-breaking remittances of overseas Filipino workers and the economic growth rate of 5.4 percent in 2006, government economists here are not impressed. It speaks volumes that the economic assessment of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, in its country report of May 2007, merely says, "The Philippine economy has proven to be resilient."

Ms Arroyo's visit follows her four-day visit to Japan last week in which she clinched some $1.86 billion worth of investment commitments and development assistance. Sumitomo Mining Co. of Japan committed to invest between $1 billion and $1.2 billion in a nickel mining project in Surigao del Norte. The commitment prompted the President to say, "Japan is sitting up and taking notice that the Philippines is back and open for business."

But this is not what attracts attention in Canberra, which has a more sensitive radar attuned to human rights, political stability and regional security issues than Japan, where trade and economic relations with the region take higher priority than political issues.

Ms Arroyo visits Australia in less auspicious times than former President Fidel V. Ramos who visited in 1994, when the Philippines was rising rapidly as the new Asian tiger economy. Then, the economic success story also somewhat excited the Australian public, government and the business establishment.

President Arroyo is not lined up to speak at the Australian National Press Club, where she would have certainly been grilled by the press on the Philippine elections and death-squad killings. But that issue is not going away as she encounters the media during her speech before the Asia Society tomorrow (Thursday) in Melbourne.

Ms Arroyo is also treading sensitive security grounds, as she is poised to sign a status of forces agreement with Australia covering conditions for deployment of Australian troops to train military and police in counter-insurgency techniques to fight Islamic terrorist groups in Mindanao. This will be the first status of forces agreement to be signed by the Philippines aside from its long-standing agreement (called Visiting Forces Agreement) with the United States. These agreements have sparked sovereignty issues to which the nationalistic Filipinos are extremely sensitive.

A, B, C, D or A Ba Ka Da?

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

WITH THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR UPON US, I'M WONDERING what our schools are going to do, given the President's Executive Order 210 which for the nth time revises our medium of instruction in schools.

President Macapagal-Arroyo signed the EO in May 2004. There was a delay with the Department of Education's implementing rules and guidelines, which were released only in July 2006. In a nutshell, the EO and the implementing rules provide for the following:

English will be taught as a second language starting with Grade 1. Starting with Grade 3, English will be used as a medium of instruction for English, Mathematics and Science. (This is actually an old requirement dating back to 2002.) Finally, the President and the DepEd require that English be the "primary medium of instruction" in all public and private high schools, "primary" defined as English being used in "not less than 70 percent of the total time allotment for all learning areas."

A group of educators has gone to the Supreme Court to challenge the executive and department orders on grounds that they are unconstitutional. The group includes National Artists Bienvenido Lumbera and Virgilio Almario, UP professor (and INQUIRER columnist) Randolf David; Isagani Cruz, president of Wika ng Kultura at Agham, and Efren Abueg, writer-in-residence at De La Salle University.

The educators argue that the 1987 Constitution declares Filipino as the national language and mandates the government to "initiate and sustain (its) use . . . as a medium of official communication and as language of instruction in the educational system."

The rationale for EO 210 is explained as "a need to develop the aptitude, competence and proficiency of our students in the English language to maintain and improve their competitive edge in emerging and fast-growing local and international industries, particularly in the area of Information and Communications Technology (ICT)."

It's an appealing argument, given all the publicity around call center jobs and how so many applicants are turned down because of lack of English proficiency. But the educators point out that call centers don't generate that many jobs in the first place so trying to get all schoolchildren to speak English does not make sense. On the other hand, if it's the broader ICT industry that's being targeted, then English becomes even more unrealistic, given that tasks such as software development are not tied to English proficiency.

Back to basics

Just for the sake of argument, let's say there is indeed a bonanza out there—in terms of outsourced and overseas jobs—waiting to be reaped if we could produce better English speakers.

The President and her advisers presume that this is best done by making English the primary medium of instruction. But this runs counter to all the scientific evidence. The research into language and education shows clearly that learning is best done through a local language.

The mother tongue (which can be Ilokano or Kapampangan or Tausug, whatever is spoken locally) should be used in the first year of school to build a bridge for learning other languages. That would be Filipino in non-Tagalog areas, and could, later, include English, Spanish, Chinese or other global languages.

One study by the Summer Institute of Linguistics' Diane Dekker and Catherine Young, "Bridging the Gap: The Development of Appropriate Educational Strategies for Minority Language Communities in the Philippines," describes an innovative program in Kalinga where the community worked with educators to develop a curriculum and teaching materials for primary school in Lilibuagan, the local language. The article is so fascinating I'm going to save a more detailed description for another column, but the authors show that this approach can produce good literacy and numeracy levels.

The conclusions of local and international studies are simple: pupils learn faster when taught in their mother tongue. By imposing English as the medium of instruction as early as Grade 1, we actually further slow down the learning processes in our schools, including those for English.

In fact, I'd argue that the continuing predominance of English for teaching has produced a labor force that is barely literate in English or Filipino, and that this translates into mediocrity in the work place. It's not surprising that overseas investors set up production facilities in other countries that may have poorer English proficiency than we do, but far surpass us with technological development and labor productivity.

Catching up

From China down to Indonesia, English language schools are cropping up like *sari-sari* stores. Some Filipinos point to these schools as "proof" that we were correct in pursuing English proficiency and that our neighbors are now seeing the error of their "nationalism" in language policies.

Let's be careful with our conclusions. These are countries that certainly saw the importance of having a national language, propagated through the schools. In the post-colonial era, this was especially important in building a sense of national identity.

But having a national language did not mean excluding access to the world. Many of our neighbors translate books, not just from English but from French, Spanish, Japanese, German. Students learn English quite late, and only optionally. In the 1960s and 1970s, Thai graduate students came to the Philippines to take up agriculture, dentistry, public health, engineering. Filipinos poked fun at their fractured English. The Thais worked hard, went home to apply what they had learned—yes, with the "poor" English—and today, we import food and household wares from them. Today, Filipinos join the millions of tourists visiting Thailand, and then wonder how they get to bring in so many visitors, despite the still poor English proficiency.

I know, some of you are thinking, "Look who's talking. Mike Tan has benefited from being able to write in English." Yes, I am a product of an era when we were punished for speaking in Filipino. But I can tell you, too, that I know I could have been a better teacher, a better writer, if I had been encouraged to use Filipino in school.

I see this with my colleagues in other countries, who are not quite as good with English but are able to convey so much of their national experiences. It's not surprising the world is waking up now to the literature, arts, cinema of our neighbors, all done in their local languages.

We need to be able to look forward to a time when Filipinos, speaking or writing in English or Spanish or Chinese, will dazzle their audiences who know that their eloquence and wisdom spring, not from the mastery of a foreign language, but from hearts that think and feel in Filipino.

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Desires

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

"CHAROL" MARY-JANES. SHINY PATENT LEATHER girly shoes, with a strap across the foot. Stepping out in them, one felt extra-feminine, dainty and demure.

Every year, when time came to shop for my new school shoes, I would gravitate toward the patent leather section, toward the Mary-janes or, as I grew older, the pointy-toed ballerina flats with a thin ribbon in front. What I got instead, year after year, were stub-toed durable and near-indestructible "boy's shoes," in sensible buff leather that made one feel ... well, sensible and destructive.

As the years rolled on, I would wonder why my mother would even bother to drag all of us to the Gregg's Shoes outlet on Aurora Boulevard in Cubao come June, when we all knew what we would end up with: sensible, practical "boy's shoes." I would even be allowed to try on the Mary-janes and other shiny footwear, but when time came to pay, I knew what would be in the box Mama was paying for.

There was one other object of desire I yearned for with every school opening. This was a new set of uniforms, bright green skirt and lightweight tan blouse with a green little "tie," the official Maryknoll uniform at the time. Instead, I ended up going to school in a faded green pleated skirt and scratchy cotton blouse with a tie whose seams would have been chewed down to tatters. Being the third in a line of five girls meant that by the time I was going to "big school," I would inherit uniforms that had already endured two previous owners. And the biggest injustice of all was that by the time it was my sister Joni's turn to don the uniforms, my mother deemed them too shabby for her daughter and so ordered a whole new set of uniforms for her!

* * *

BUT school shoes and uniforms weren't the only things mismatched between my own personal desires and my mother's choices.

Her one dream in life was that at least one of her daughters would take up nursing, eventually emigrating to the United States and then sending home dollars to give her and Papa a comfortable old age. But as is often the case, none of us sisters were inclined to make her wishes come true. Our youngest sister Charo started out being the answer to Mama's prayers, enrolling in a nursing course at St. Paul's College, but along the way she changed her mind and decided to go for a medical degree, transferring to the University of Santo Tomas where she pursued a degree in biochemistry. But by the time she was to enter medical school, our father had been felled by a stroke and there wasn't enough money for a medicine course. She is now a teacher.

For my part, I had always known that writing was what I wanted to do in life. But I also loved reading, and was torn between pursuing a course that would allow me to make a living by writing, or pursuing the pleasure of reading literature and sitting around the classroom talking about the books with my classmates and teacher.

When I told her about my dilemma, Mama was livid with rage and wanted to know how much money I hoped to make by either writing or reading. I thought I had the potential to be a creative writer, but my mother's insistence on a "practical" course led me to journalism instead. I know, keep your laughter down!

* * *

I ONCE complained to my daughter that in a conversation, my husband accused me of being a spendthrift with expensive taste "when you earn so little." Of course, ours being a typical mother-daughter relationship, she sided with her father. "Your salary is so depressing, Ma," she said, depressing because it is her dream, too, to pursue a career in journalism. "You have all the fame and the glory, but it's Dad who makes the money."

Well, fat chance she'll end up rolling in dough, because she's not even taking up journalism but is pursuing a degree in comparative literature. I mean, talk about impractical! We were once sitting around and speculating on what sort of career she could have. I said she would probably end up "an underpaid, overworked academic," and she laughed and, surprise!, agreed with me.

But she promises to marry a rich man who will provide her—and by extension, her family—with all the luxuries we will ever want or need. I say dream on, because the chances of her ever finding such a man in her circle of dreamy academics and loquacious debaters are about equal to Team Unity's dominating the Senate lineup. (Does this mean my daughter will have to cheat her way into materially rewarding matrimony?)

* * *

STILL, she is already, in a way, living out a dream—my dream for myself all those many years ago.

When she complains about how many "readings" she has to do for her classes, I twinge with envy at having so much time to do nothing but read, and read all the good books that mark significant turning points in literature, guided by knowledgeable teachers. Already, she is teaching me, telling me about new books or authors who are significant, or exciting, or just interesting. I buy them and we read the books by turns, and we sit around the dining table or loll around in bed while watching TV and talk about the books and the characters.

While none of us sisters was able to fulfill my mother's fantasies about a nurse-daughter earning dollars and sending money home regularly, I think I am blessed having a daughter who is having the time of her life living out a fantasy I had nursed in my youth. Of course, as my friend Pennie mock-complained about our children who are pursuing creative courses, "none of them will be able to support us in the style to which we're not accustomed." Then again, they are feeding their souls and nurturing their spirits. And teaching us about how sometimes, the mismatch between one generation's desires and another's preferences can come full circle and reward us all.

Displaying the flag and playing the anthem

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

AN EARLIER GENERATION KNEW THE SUMMER vacation from school as the *"bakasyon grande,"* the long vacation compared to the few weeks off between semesters or even the Christmas break. Like many children, I dreaded the opening of classes, having to wake up early in the morning, having to carry a heavy suitcase filled with textbooks and notebooks, having to do homework and hurdle quizzes and tests again. I knew the end of summer vacation was near when I saw street vendors hawking Philippine flags on the streets of the city and when cars and homes proudly displayed the national colors.

We seem to have lost the enthusiasm for the flag these days mainly because we see it so much that we have come to take it for granted. One could blame this partially on the 1998 Philippine Centennial, when flags flew everywhere like streamers and buntings till they became ordinary and meaningless. Our flag has been so used and abused that they are even used to make celebrations festive. There is nothing wrong with that, but then they are not taken down until the elements have taken their toll and our flags, the symbol of the nation, look like tattered rags littering the landscape.

Maybe it was my elementary school training, or maybe it was my Boy Scout training, but I remember being taught how to respect the flag. Flags were raised in the morning and brought down at sunset. Flags were not allowed to fly in inclement weather. Flags were not allowed to fly at night except in designated areas, and these were always lit up. Flags that were worn out were taken out of service, and not recycled into rags (they were burned in a simple but solemn way). We were taught how to carry the flag, to make sure it did not touch the ground. We were taught how to fold it in such a way that it formed a triangle with one star on the white field sticking out.

Much of this seems like ancient history to Generation X and I wonder if I'm just being old-fashioned or maybe something should really be done to return the dwindling respect for the flag as well as for the national anthem.

Few people know that there is such a thing as RA 8491 or the Flag and Heraldic Code of the Philippines that comes with detailed implementing rules and regulations covering other esoteric things like the national motto, seal, etc. By law, the national anthem, "whether played or sung, shall be in accordance with the musical arrangement and composition of Julian Felipe." Our problem is that the anthem was a march first played on a rickety piano in Cavite and without lyrics. Thus, when played, it must carry a brisk martial tone and tempo, but when you add lyrics it's hard to catch up with the music. Our problem is that the anthem is taken like any ordinary piece of music and is either sung as a dirge, and very slowly as one does "Ama Namin" or it takes such fanciful arrangements, the worst of which we hear live on television during international boxing matches.

I think we are over-using the national anthem. We use the national anthem to begin any kind of public program, no matter how insignificant or inappropriate. This has led to the question of which should come first, the invocation or the anthem. In many places, I have noticed that people have the invocation before the anthem on the grounds of "God before country." I would agree if the program is held in a church or is religious in nature, but if the program is secular and public, the anthem should be sung or played ahead because it is the state that guarantees the free exercise of any religion. Unfortunately, the law is silent on this matter, but I think the anthem should always precede the invocation.

While the law says that the anthem, "should not be played and sung for mere recreation, amusement or entertainment purposes," it allows its use during the following: "a. international competitions where the Philippines is host or has a representative; b. local competitions; c. during sign-off and sign-on of radio broadcasting and television stations; d. before the initial and last screening of films or before the opening of theater performances."

I have my reservations about playing the anthem in theaters because there are times when the program or film is not appropriate. For example, why play it before the first showing of a cartoon film or worse an R-rated sex-and-violence film? If the anthem is played to accompany the raising of the flag, fine, but if it is played on a loudspeaker and the people who have to stand at attention do not have a flag within sight, it does seem odd. That we play the anthem at the start of the day during flag raising is all right, but playing the anthem at an evening performance also feels odd.

I'm not even talking about the musical quality of the national anthem available commercially, with its awful electronic accompaniment. We have an orchestral and band version of the anthem, but I don't know if it's available commercially.

What should the tempo and pitch be when it is sung by a group or solo so that it encourages citizens to sing? The national anthem was not made for solo jazzed-up singing. The national anthem is to be sung in the national language, not in English or Cebuano.

Again, am I being old-fashioned here? Is there a government-approved way of singing the anthem and displaying the flag? We at least have a guide in the Flag Law that many people remain ignorant or defiant of.

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

Why the nation can't move on

LET ME REACT TO CONRADO DE QUIROS' column "Rage against the dying of the light." (INQUIRER, 5/23/07)

Frankly speaking, we Filipinos have no idea of what justice really means. No country, where too many injustices are committed and its people don't do something to stop them, has ever progressed. The reason for this is that, whenever an opportunity or a challenge presents itself to us to test our capabilities as a nation, we blink.

Our country's violent political landscape is comparable to that of Afghanistan and Iraq, whether during election time or normal times. Every day, we always hear news of a journalist, a leftist, a police officer, or even a public official being killed or gone missing.

The Philippines today can be compared to America at the time of Al Capone, whose goons were deeply embedded in every fabric of society. We can't trust the military because we can't get over the trauma of Marcos' martial law; we can't go to the police because some of them are themselves the crime suspects; and we can't get any help from the media because some of them have been bought by the powers-that-be.

Who wants help from the communists? Certainly not us who want a democratic, peaceful and just life. How about from our public servants? Most of them are hated by the people because they operate like Capone's mafia, buying government positions and killing people to get things done.

De Quiros is right. Cheating, lying, stealing and killing are all around us, staring us in the face even. The question is, do we Filipinos have the balls to fight these evils? The United States went after Capone and other high-profile criminals.

A good start for us is to jail those high officials guilty of cheating, lying, stealing and killing. That will be the only time Lady Justice and God will start looking at us kindly.

—EDWARD FELIX M. DONATO,
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Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

Manila mayor should get rid of sidewalk vendors

THE NEXT MAYOR OF MANILA SHOULD address, with priority, the pressing and pestering problem of sidewalk vending in the city.

The University Belt alone, not to mention the Tourist Belt in Ermita, is teeming with vendors clogging the already congested sidewalks of downtown Manila. Claro M. Recto Avenue, Quezon Boulevard, Narciso Reyes Street, etc., are haven of illegal vendors selling their wares—from second-hand books to cell phone accessories.

Vending should be strictly regulated; the displaced vendors should be relocated elsewhere. Let's not make Manila's sidewalks into a big flea market.

Downtown Manila should regain its lost glory and compete with its neighboring cities.

—PEDRO REFUERZO JR.,
6737 Taylo St., Makati City

Mayor won on credentials, track record

THE NEWS ITEM "SEEING STARS FALL (and rise) in politics" (INQUIRER, 5/20/07) reported that former President Joseph Estrada's nephew, Emilio Ramon Ejercito III, has been reelected mayor of Pagsanjan, Laguna (his third and last term). His victory can be attributed to his credentials as well as accomplishments.

Mayor ER Ejercito graduated from the UP College of Fine Arts, major in advertising. He was twice chosen as one of the 10 outstanding local government executives of the Philippines. Like the governor-elect of Batangas, Vilma Santos-Recto, he took a "special crash course" at the National College of Public Administration and Governance, University of the Philippines, Diliman before becoming mayor of Pagsanjan in 1991.

Finally, Mayor Ejercito has transformed a once sleeping town into a potential commercial and tourism center.

—CRISOSTOMO B. VILAR,
vice mayor,
Pagsanjan, Laguna

WALANG NATALO DINAYA DAW

Bago ang eleksyon, tinulak ni **Senador Gordon** ang computerized election para iwasan ang dayaan, kinontra ni **Senador Pimentel** at **Senador Osmena** ng **oposisyon**.

Ngayong tapos na ang eleksyon. Aba! **oposisyon** pa rin ang **nagrereklamong dinadaya** daw sila.

WALA NA SILANG GINAWA KUNDI MANGGULO

Lumalakas ang **Piso**.
Dumadami ang **Namumuhunan**
at **Trabaho**.
Umaasenso na tayo.

'WAG NANG PASAWAY TAMA NA ANG BANGAYAN

Trillanes miracle or crisis?

EVERYONE IN THE PRESS SEEMS TO BE CELebrating Antonio Trillanes' likely victory in the race for the Senate. Most people have even called it a "miracle," taking note of his "rise" in pre-poll surveys and in an exit poll—of course, with the help of the media, since he wasn't able to actually campaign. The media did the work for him.

But I was dismayed to hear of his "priority." I understand how he hates the administration for sending him to jail and for the alleged corruption in government, especially in the Armed Forces of the Philippines. But an impeachment complaint in the middle of the Philippine economy's resurgence can only be disruptive. It can cause more poverty and unemployment.

I, along with my fellow youth, appreciate how this administration has saved us from the economic crises during the Estrada administration, by opening up new job opportunities for us working students, especially in the IT and BPO industries. A new impeachment complaint could cause another political and economic tremor.

Trillanes can introduce a lot of much-needed reforms without making political noise and disrupting the economy.

—JAN RICHARD A. RENES,
jan_renes24@yahoo.com

Estrada man right for opposing impeachment

DIDAGEN "MR. SHUT UP" DILANGALEN, FORmer spokesperson of ousted President Joseph Estrada, said he is not inclined to go along with the opposition's agenda to revive an impeachment case against President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Dilangalen said, "I don't see any good and convincing reason to impeach her. The country must move forward. Impeachment will only serve as a drawback to our steadily growing economy. We are all losers in the end." (INQUIRER, 5/19/07)

Dilangalen is right. Impeachment will only retard the now growing economy. Bangko Sentral Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said the balance of payments (BOP) surplus for the first two months was "the result of significant increases in exports, OFW remittances, foreign portfolio investments and sustained income of the BSP."

At the 25th anniversary of the Philippine Council for Health Research and Development, President Arroyo expressed elation over the National Statistics Office's report that the January jobless rate was reduced by 0.6 percent to 7.5 percent from 8.1 percent last year. Ms Arroyo is happy that more than a million jobs were created in the past 12 months.

The International Monetary Fund expects the Philippine economy to grow by 5.8 percent this year. Earlier the National Economic and Development Authority said the strengthening of the peso, the government's improving fiscal condition, the slowdown of inflation and a pickup in the stock market will help the economy achieve the government's target.

—ELIGIO M. PASTORIN,
Rositaville Subd.,
Concepcion I, Marikina City

Legalized extortion

WHEN I WAS TEACHING PHILIPPINE CONStitution to undergraduates many years ago, my students never had any problem understanding the meaning of the constitutional provision: no man shall be denied access to the courts by reason of poverty. It was so self-explanatory. Any word that came out of my mouth to explain it would have been totally redundant. Or so, I thought.

Then the Supreme Court flummoxed and discombobulated everyone by promulgating new rules raising judicial costs to such astronomical levels. Virtually, only the rich can now afford to seek judicial redress of their grievances.

Not to be outdone, the Department of Justice has also imposed fees for the filing of some criminal cases to be paid by complainants who seek the prosecution of persons deemed criminal offenders by law. These are crimes against the State, that is why they are labeled "People of the Philippines vs John Doe."

The complainants are treated as mere witnesses for the "People," but the DOJ, instead of thanking them for their civic-spiritedness, makes them pay—all because of their incidental claim for recompense. This brazen act of legalized extortion is happening only in the Philippines.

—STEPHEN L. MONSANTO,
slmonsanto@yahoo.com.ph

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
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Police chief of Laguna town slain

STA. ROSA CITY—FOUR men gunned down the chief of police of Cabuyao, Laguna, in front of his house inside a subdivision here at about 7 a.m. yesterday, police said.

Supt. Bernie Banalo, 54, died of bullet wounds in different parts of the body while undergoing surgery at the St. James Hospital.

Supt. Raymuno Oliquiano, city police chief, said Banalo suffered at least seven bullet wounds in the face and chest.

Police have yet to ascertain the motive behind the murder. "We really don't have any idea who could have done this gruesome murder. But his killing could be related to his work as a police officer," Oliquiano told the INQUIRER.

He said Banalo, who was on his way to report for work, was feeding his dog in front of his house at Panorama Subdivision in Barangay Dita when at least four unidentified men approached him and shot him at close range.

Several witnesses saw the gunmen ran toward the squatters' area along a railroad near the victim's house.

Banalo's relatives rushed him to a nearby hospital where he died an hour later.

Police recovered bullet shells from a .45 cal. pistol at the crime scene.

Senior Supt. Prudencio Bañas, acting provincial police director, condemned the killing and vowed its immediate resolution.

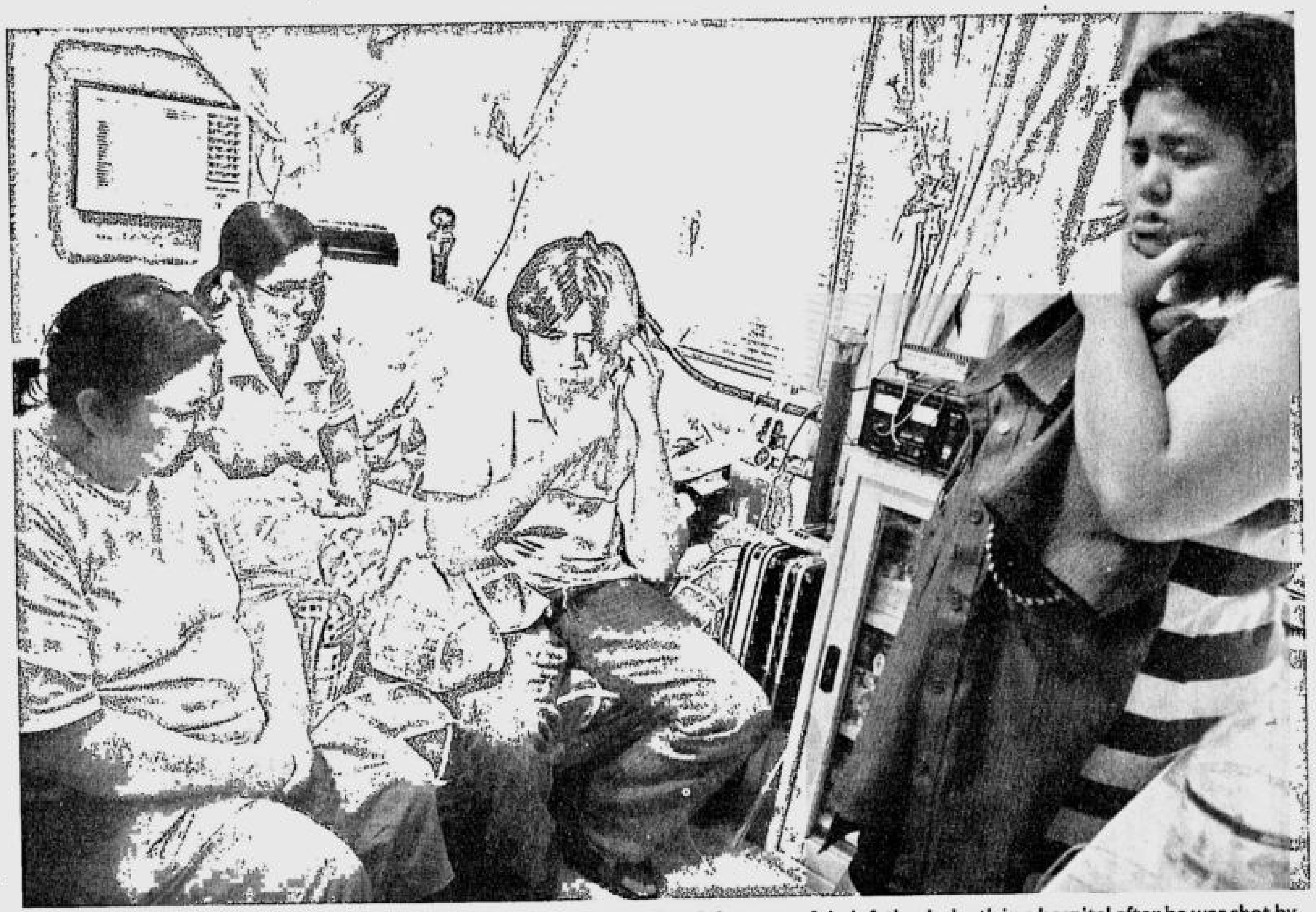
Before his appointment as chief of police of Cabuyao, Banalo served as head of the police detachment assigned to Malacañang.

Earlier, the Communist Party of the Philippines claimed that government forces suffered 31 casualties, including policemen and officers who were gunned down in assassinations and ambuscades.

In a report published in its official organ, Ang Bayan, the CPP said the figures represented the gains being made by the party and its military arm, the New People's Army, in its fight to set up a socialist government in the country.

The military disputed the CPP report, saying it was just propaganda.

It said the CPP instead suffered losses in the hands of government soldiers, losing dozens of firearms in the process. *Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon*



TRAGEDY befalls the Banalo family as the police officer's children cry in grief at news of their father's death in a hospital after he was shot by four gunmen in front of their house in Cabuyao, Laguna.

EDWIN BACASMAS

Boracay reels from outages; gov't urged to act fast

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

BORACAY ISLAND, AKLAN—Resorts are urging the government to solve the island's power shortage, saying it was hurting tourism and other businesses.

Power interruptions and fluctuations hit the island after vessels docking on its shoreline in the past few months damaged submarine power cables.

While the power interruptions have not seriously affected the operation of resorts because most are equipped with power generators, business owners are calling the government's attention to the problem to prevent long-term damage to the country's prime tourist destination.

The Boracay Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) said the power interruptions and fluctuations resulted in additional expenses and damage to electrical units.

It said the power supply problem should be resolved immediately because it might hurt tourist arrivals.

Last year, around half a million tourists visited the island and tourism earnings reached P8 billion.

The BCCI urged the government to address the long-term power supply needs of the island because the existing transmission lines from the mainland to Boracay could not sustain the increasing power needs.

The power interruptions started in February after the cargo barge LCT Filipino damaged one of two submarine cables, which linked the island to the Aklan mainland. The barge was docking in Barangay Manoc-Manoc in the southern part of the 1,032-hectare island.

The damage worsened after unidentified vessels also struck the underwater cables on Feb. 26 and April 22.

The docking site is the entry point for cargo vessels bringing in supplies to resorts and restaurants, as well as construction materials.

Wilfredo Ortiz, officer-in-charge of the Aklan Electric Cooperative (Akelco), said the 69-kv transmission line of the National Transmission Corp. (Transco) had to be used after the two Akelco lines were damaged.

MILF tags Cabinet member in bid to ensure bet's win

MARAWI CITY—A RANKING national government official is "moving heaven and earth" to ensure the victory of outgoing Mayor Omar "Solitario" Ali as governor of Lanao del Sur, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) said in its official website.

Another close Malacañang ally in Central Mindanao is also helping the candidacy of Solitario's rival in an effort to expand political influence throughout the Muslim region.

The MILF identified the government official as National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales, who is also president of the Partido Demokratiko Sosyalista ng Pilipinas (PDSP) to which Solitario belongs.

In the nine-way race for governor, Solitario, reelectionist Gov. Aleem Bashier Manalao, outgoing Lanao del Sur Rep. Benasing Macarambon Jr., and Mamintal Adiong Jr., are the forerunners.

However, the MILF clarified that Gonzales' moves might not have the blessing of President Macapagal-Arroyo, who is originally of the Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi) but is chair emeritus of the dominant Lakas-CMD party.

Kampi has Macarambon as gubernatorial standard-bearer while Lakas has declared a free zone with Manalao and Adiong as its candidates.

A former MNLF commander, Solitario has Marawi and the MNLF communities as his principal support base. Macarambon, who is also an MNLF leader, banks on the political base he cultivated in the second district while Manalao is popular as a religious leader, especially among women groups.

A son of the late Gov. Mamintal Adiong Sr., Adiong enjoyed the support of Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao Gov. Zaldy Ampatuan and his father, Maguindanao Gov. Datu Andal Ampatuan, a staunch Palace ally who delivered a 12-0 result in favor of Team Unity in the senatorial race.

Datu Andal is reportedly embarking on this political project in Lanao del Sur in preparation for a run for ARMM governor next year, which can pit him against Solitario.

After the May 14 balloting, the gubernatorial race had been reduced to a contest between Solitario and Adiong, edging out both Manalao and Macarambon. In the official count, Solitario is ahead of Adiong.

Although it has seemingly shown some interest on the gubernatorial race's turnout, the MILF has reiterated its "no election participation" policy that covers its political and military officials.

Muhammad Ameen, chairperson of the MILF secretariat, described the country's electoral process as "like that of the 'law of the jungle' where the strong devours the weak."

"This system breeds hostility, disunity, and corruption in society," he said.

Solitario has impinged on MILF sensibilities after openly declaring that if he wins the governorship, he will invite American troops to conduct Balikatan exercises in Lanao del Sur. This stance has been opposed by civil society groups and professionals in the province.

On the other hand, an Adiong win means the further expansion of the influence of Datu Andal, who has a long-standing rift with the MILF. *Ryan D. Rosauro, Inquirer Mindanao*

ROUNDUP

2 fires raze homes of 800 families

DAVAO CITY—More than 800 families were displaced by two fires that razed their homes in coastal villages here and in Ozamiz City this week. Left homeless in the fire which hit Tinago and San Roque villages in Ozamiz on May 28 were 461 families. Ludie Raras, Ozamiz City social welfare officer, said the victims of the four-hour fire were staying at the city gymnasium. Insp. Rommel Villafuerte, city fire marshal, placed the damage at about P4 million. In Sunday's fire incident here, which affected Barangay 31-A, about 400 families were displaced, according to authorities. Joie Mae Almerez, a government social worker, said assistance was still needed in rebuilding the survivors' homes. ***Ryan D. Rosauro and Dennis Jay C. Santos, Inquirer Mindanao***

Whale dies in Cagayan

TUGUEGARAO CITY—Personnel from the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources failed to save a severely wounded humpback whale that residents found on the shore of Claveria town on May 20. The month-old humpback whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*), which was 17-foot long and weighed about a ton, died despite efforts by BFAR personnel and veterinarians to treat its wounds believed inflicted by sharks. ***Estanislao Caldez, Inquirer Northern Luzon***

Lessons on bomb disposal

KIDAPAWAN CITY—US soldiers gave some 200 city policemen bomb detection and disposal lessons as part of ongoing RP-US joint military exercises against terrorism. Chief Insp. Leo Ajero, city police chief, said the newly trained lawmen would teach colleagues the lessons that they learned from the Americans. ***Edwin Fernandez, Inquirer Mindanao***

Ateneo Law grad tops Tarlac Board

AN ATENEO law graduate topped the winners in the election for board members representing the third district in Tarlac. Jose Romulo Castro, son of Quezon City Assessor Jose Castro, was the lone survivor under the ticket of Jose "Peping" Cojuangco who lost to Vic Yap, son of Gov. Jose "Apeng" Yap in the gubernatorial race. A young businessman and entrepreneur, Castro is chair and president of B&C Marketing and Management Corp.

Couple loses P1.6-M to robbers

LUCENA CITY—A rich couple was robbed on Sunday by three still unidentified armed men who took about P1.6 million worth of cash and valuables. Businessmen Aristeo and Recilda Pontioso, residents of a ritzy subdivision here, were tied inside their bedroom as the robbers ransacked all cabinets and drawers. The robbers took assorted jewelry items amounting to about P700,000 as well as four cell phones, two Tag Heuer ladies and men watches, Canon digital camera and P61,695 cash money with a total value of P927,695. ***Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon***

Davao Sur board canvass members deny fraud raps

DIGOS CITY—MEMBERS OF THE MUNICIPAL board of canvassers (MBOC) of Sulop, Davao del Sur have denied allegations they rigged certificates of canvass (CoC) in favor of some local and national politicians.

Daniel Escleto, MBOC chair, told the INQUIRER the video footage submitted by lawyers of Nationalist People's Coalition (NPC) gubernatorial candidate Rep. Claude Bautista to the provincial Comelec office did not show any irregularity.

Bautista's lawyers have argued that the video was enough to exclude Sulop from the provincial canvassing because it showed MBOC members erasing and replacing figures in the CoC.

They also said Bautista's rival, Rep. Douglas Cagas, benefited from the incident.

Aside from adding votes to Cagas, the alterations also allegedly benefited Ilocos Gov. Chavit Singson and reelectionist Sen. Ralph Recto, both Team Unity candidates.

Cagas ran under the administration coalition and was one of those who defended President Macapagal-Arroyo against the opposition-instigated impeachment proceedings.

"We did nothing illegal. Why leave a trail if we are doing something illegal?" Escleto said of the video, which was also shown over ABS-CBN last week.

Escleto said the corrections were made after they noticed "mathematical errors" in the computation.

"They should have examined if there were also erasures in the statement of votes (SoV). If you alter the CoC in favor of some candidates, you should also alter the SoV. But in our case, the SoV is clean," he said. *Eldie Aguirre and Orlando Dinoy, Inquirer Mindanao*

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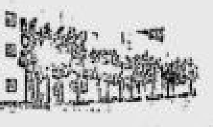

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Singsons counter priests' claim of dirty Ilocos polls

VIGAN CITY—OUTGOING ILOCOS Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson and his cousin, Rep. Eric Singson, disputed claims of priests in the province that the elections here were marred by irregularities.

"That is their opinion. However, the elections in Ilocos Sur were very peaceful. There was no [incident of] election violence," Governor Singson said.

On May 21, priests from the Diocese of Nueva Segovia condemned the irregularities in the conduct of the May 14 elections, citing massive vote-buying and the use of questionable election documents.

The statement was signed by Fr. Cosmenio Rosimo, president of a group representing the more than 30 priests, and by Ilocos Sur Archbishop Ernesto Salgado.

Singson said he would help the priests if they decided to investigate the supposed election irregularities.

"Since these are all allegations, let us unearth the accuracy of these [reports]," said Singson, a senatorial candidate of the administration's Team Unity.

The priests said they would support moves calling for the recounting or recanvassing of votes "to ensure truth and justice, as well as [to restore] confidence in our [electoral] processes."

Rep. Eric Singson also defended the integrity of the elections.

"How can we demand a recount if there were no complaints from the barangay, municipal and provincial levels? There were watchers from all camps who witnessed all the proceedings," he said.

He said the recent elections were "the most peaceful and orderly in [Ilocos Sur's] recent history."

"The province was put in a bad light because of the unproven allegations," he said.

Losing gubernatorial candidate Efren Rafanan filed an election protest against the winning candidate, Vice Gov. Deogracias Victor Savellano, a protégé of Governor Singson.

Rafanan said irregularities marred the elections in the cities of Candon and Vigan, and in the towns of Cabugao, Narvacan and San Vicente.

"I just want the true voice of the people to come out," Rafanan said.

But Savellano said he was unfazed by the election protest.

"I welcome the election protest. It will vindicate my victory," he said.

Savellano got 132,656 votes against Rafanan's 131,264, or a difference of 1,392 votes.

In the 2001 elections, Savellano beat Rafanan in the gubernatorial race.

Governor Singson dismissed Rafanan's protest and defended Savellano.

"[About] 99 percent of losers cry and claim they were cheated. Rafanan had done that three times already," Singson said, referring to Rafanan's third unsuccessful attempt to become the governor.

Singson, who topped the senatorial race in the province, said Rafanan used him in his campaign to improve his chances.

"He fooled many people by saying that we had already reconciled and that he was supporting my senatorial bid, including my brother Jerry, who ran and won as vice governor of Ilocos Sur," Singson said.

But Rafanan dismissed Singson's claims. "The election results showed that [Chavit] lost [his] control [and influence over] the province," he said.

Leoncio Balbin Jr., Inquirer Northern Luzon

MARKET DAY
Clothes and textile in various colors are on display at a stall in a public market in Pikit, North Cotabato.
JEOFFREY MAITEM/INQUIRER MINDANAO

Evacuation plans set for Bulusan

By Bobby Q. Labalan
Inquirer Southern Luzon

SORSOGON CITY—THE PROVINCIAL Disaster Coordinating Council (PDCC) is preparing the evacuation of as many as 49,000 residents in six towns surrounding Mt. Bulusan should the volcano, still at alert level 2, continue to show unrest.

The evacuation "is the worst-case scenario we are looking at," said Gov. Raul Lee, who presided over a joint meeting of the Bicol Regional Disaster Coordinating Council and the PDCC.

"Preparations and coordination have been initiated, including possible sources of food supplies and the vehicles to be used in case there is a need to evacuate residents nearest the slopes of the volcano," Lee added.

The Office of Civil Defense-Bicol said the immediate localities that would feel the effects of the eruption were Irosin, Bulusan, Juban and Casiguran, where some 5,800 residents have to be evacuated immediately from six villages.

On a wider scale of destruction, residents of a total of 34 barangays in six municipalities, which include Barcelona and Gubat, have to be relocated to safe areas, according to data provided by the OCD-Bicol.

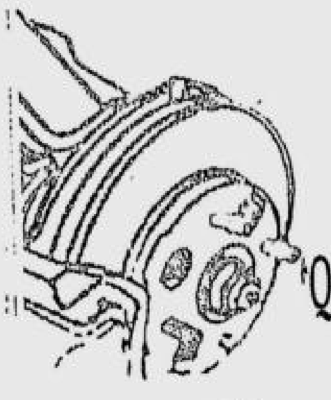
Scientists have recorded 28 high-frequency volcanic earthquakes during the past 24 hours, according to the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) bulletin on Tuesday morning.

Phivolcs Director Renato Solidum told the INQUIRER in a mobile phone interview that the alert level warning system being used by the agency "reflects the condition of the volcano based on the actual monitoring of seismicity, ground deformation and other parameters being shown by the volcano."

"Alert level 2 will remain hoisted over Mt. Bulusan as long as it continues to exhibit signs of unrest," the Phivolcs head added.

Alert level 2 was raised on May 20 following increased volcanic earthquakes and ground swelling.

Residents near rivers or stream channels have been put on alert against life-threatening *lahar* and flash floods during heavy rains, which might move down ash and loose volcanic deposits from the upper slopes.



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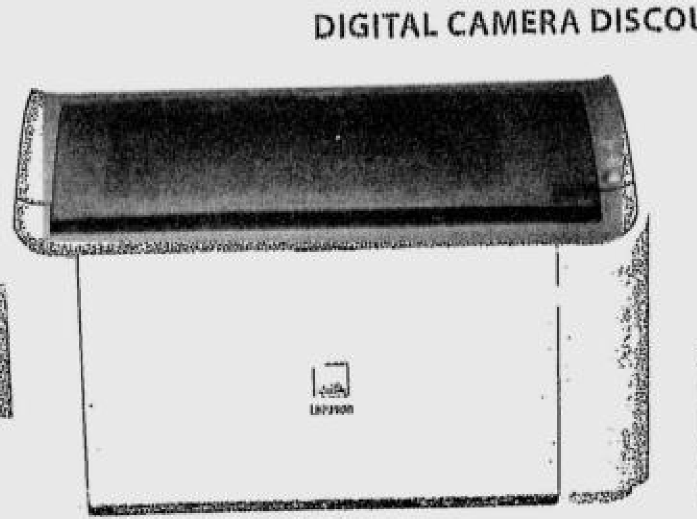

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Why 'Igorot vote' didn't work in Baguio

By Maurice Malanes
Baguio City

CAPITALIZING ON THE "IGOROT vote" in Baguio City, the gateway to the Cordillera, opposition candidates focused on issues over land and a more dispersed urban development—both close to the hearts of Igorot and non-Igorot people alike.

'There is definitely an Igorot vote in Baguio but the Iglesia [ni Cristo] factor did us in'

But the Iglesia ni Cristo (INC) vote and a well-oiled machinery of administration candidates waylaid, if not shattered, the Igorot vote that opposition candidates were banking on.

"There is definitely an Igorot vote in Baguio but the Iglesia [ni Cristo] factor did us in," said losing congressional candidate Jose Molintas, whose main voting base is the Ibaloi vote.

The INC practices bloc voting. Its leaders choose and endorse a lineup of candidates whom members must vote for.

Although Molintas' opponent, reelectionist Rep. Mauricio Domogan, is another Igorot, who traces his roots to Mt. Province and the Bago tribe, the "Iglesia factor" worked to his advantage, said political observers.

Before the May 14 elections, Molintas was leading in surveys and mock elections in the city. But the exercises apparently failed to factor in the Iglesia vote, which was made known shortly before election.

How big really is the Iglesia vote? There is no actual data. But if its endorsed party-list group, Buhay, is the gauge, then it has more or less 7,000 solid votes.

The Iglesia factor was also apparent in the other electoral positions. Save for three aspiring councilors, all the candidates—from mayor and vice mayor down, whom the Iglesia endorsed—won handily.

Church vote

But another church vote to watch out for is emerging—the vote from the fast-growing evangelical and renewal or charismatic church groups.

Apart from his Ibaloi vote as base, neophyte Isabelo Cosalan Jr., who was part of the opposition, landed ninth in the city council race even if the Iglesia did not endorse him.

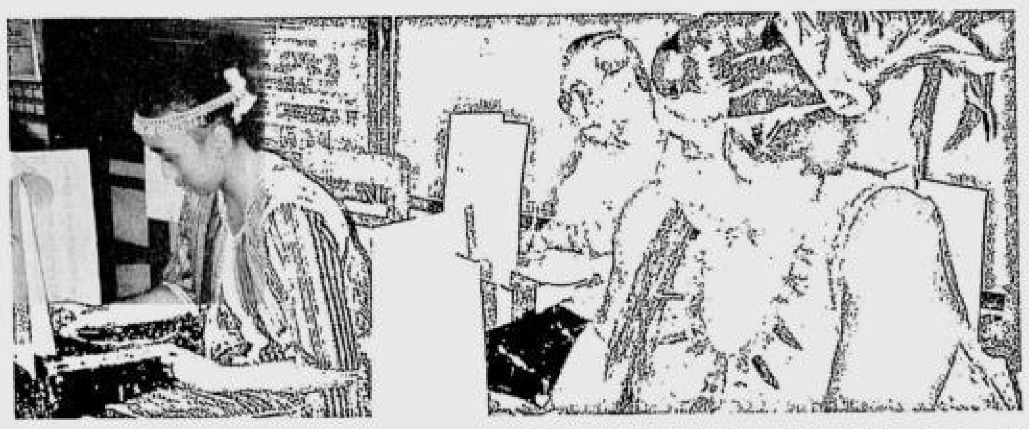
A geodetic engineer, Cosalan is also an associate pastor of the Good News Community Fellowship, an evangelical group that has ecumenical relations with other church denominations. "The vote from my church and from its ecumenical allies definitely boosted my chance," he said.

'Principled vote'

The United Opposition's candidates in Baguio campaigned hard against issues such as alleged questionable multimillion-peso contracts and pushed a dispersed urban development that would not only decongest the city of more than 350,000 people but would also benefit neighboring towns in Benguet.

But Igorot opposition candidates led by Molintas and vice mayoral candidate Faustino Olowan found out what machinery could do.

"We may have won the battle, but not the counting. Still, we are confident that we earned the electorate's principled vote," said Olowan, who lost by a slim margin of 1,283 votes to Daniel Fariñas, the running mate of winning mayoral candidate, Reinaldo Bautista Jr.



THE MAY 14 elections saw the Igorot vote failing to deliver for the city's Igorot candidates. The Ibalois of Benguet were the indigenous settlers of the site where Americans built the summer capital in 1909.
VINCENT CABREZA

Olowan and Molintas said they had only 200 volunteer watchers compared to the reported 2,500 paid watchers of the camp of Domogan and former Baguio mayor and representative, Bernardo Vergara, both of Lakas.

Machinery, however, failed to boost the chances of Vergara in the mayoral race.

Since it could not field poll watchers in all the more than 800 precincts in the city, the United Opposition was not entitled to a copy of the certificate of canvass for the party's own quick count.

"Part of machinery is being able to employ enough poll watchers, aside from being able to provide lunch and donate certain items to the barangays (villages) and giving out insurance to teachers who count ballots," said Olowan.

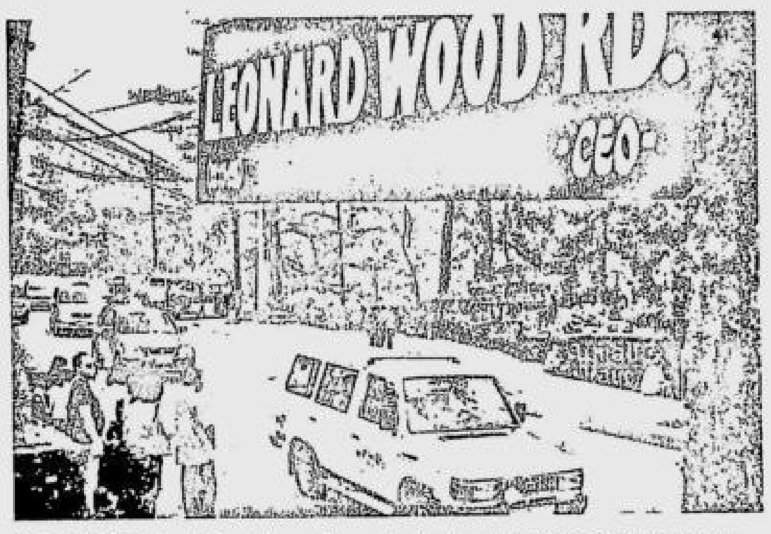
Reminders of American legacy

By Elmer Kristian Dauigoy
Baguio City

AS BAGUIO PREPARES TO CELEbrate the centennial of its founding in 1909, the city has clung on to the traces of its American founders.

Baguio, which was established by the American government as a colonial hill station and its rest and recreation center in Northern Luzon, became a chartered city on Sept. 1, 1909.

As a city designed and built by the United States at the turn of the 20th century, city roads and landmarks were named after prominent figures in American history that helped shape events that defined the future of Baguio, and even the country's.



LEONARD Wood Road is an important street that leads tourists to major spots in Baguio like the Teachers' Camp, Botanical Garden and Wright Park.
ELMER KRISTIAN DAUIGOY

The following are some of the city streets and landmarks that retain their American names:

- **Session Road.** Baguio's busiest road traversing the central business district was named after the first session of the Philippine Commission held here from April 22 to June 11, 1904. The meeting officially initiated the use of Baguio as the Philippines' summer capital.
- **Kennon Road.** Carved on the scenic mountainsides of Benguet, this zigzag road was named after Maj. Lyman W. V. Kennon, who supervised its construction. The 34-km road, originally called the Benguet Road and built as a horse trail, was completed in 1905 through the labor of Japanese, Chinese and Filipino workers.
- **Brent Road.** A strip leading to the Brent International School was named after Right Reverend Charles Henry Brent. He came to the Philippines in the 1900s and became the first bishop of the Episcopalian Church in the country. In 1909, he founded the school named after him.
- **Gov. Pack Road.** A road connecting Marcos Highway to downtown Baguio was named after William Pack, who was appointed governor of Benguet on Nov. 15, 1901. He became the first governor of Mt. Province from March 15, 1909 to Dec. 31, 1912.
- **Harrison Road.** A road parallel to Session Road and which is near Burnham Park, it was named after Francis Burton Harrison who served as the governor general of the Philippines from 1913 to 1921.
- **Leonard Wood Road.** Another important road that leads to city attractions like Teachers Camp, the Baguio Botanical Garden and Wright Park, it was named after Leonard Wood, the governor general of the Philippines from 1921 to 1927.
- **Laubach Road.** This road was named after Dr. Frank Charles Laubach, a Christian missionary who taught Maranao people how to read and write in 1935. He also wrote a book on Jose Rizal, which was published in 1936, and translated Rizal's "Mi Ultimo Adios."
- **Kneedler Road.** This road near Camp John Hay was named after Dr. Harry Dolome Kneedler, who came to the Philippines with the United States Medical Corps during the 1900s. He stayed and became a rich realtor.
- **Worcester Road.** A road at the back of the Baguio General Hospital and Medical Center was named after zoologist Dean C. Worcester. The road is in Barangay Fil-Am, where Worcester used to live. From 1901 to 1913, Worcester served as the secretary of the interior.
- **Burnham Park.** The city's most famous park was named after Daniel H. Burnham. He was a famous architect and urban planner from Chicago, Illinois, who came to Baguio in 1905 and laid out the plan in building the city.
- **Wright Park.** Another famous park known for horseback riding, it was named after General Luke E. Wright who served as acting governor general from Dec. 24, 1901 to Jan. 31, 1904. He was appointed to serve that post from Feb. 1, 1904 to Nov. 3, 1905.
- **Malcolm Square.** A public square at the foot of Session Road near the Baguio public market, this was named after Justice George Malcolm who wrote Baguio's charter when it became a city in 1909.
- **Camp John Hay.** A former rest and recreation center of the Americans, this was named after John Milton Hay, a lawyer and a diplomat. He served as the secretary of US President Abraham Lincoln from 1861 to 1865 and became the Secretary of State from 1898 to 1905.

At Teachers Camp, three of the 13 halls have American names. These are the Albert Hall, White Hall and Pages Hall. All others were named after former Philippine presidents.

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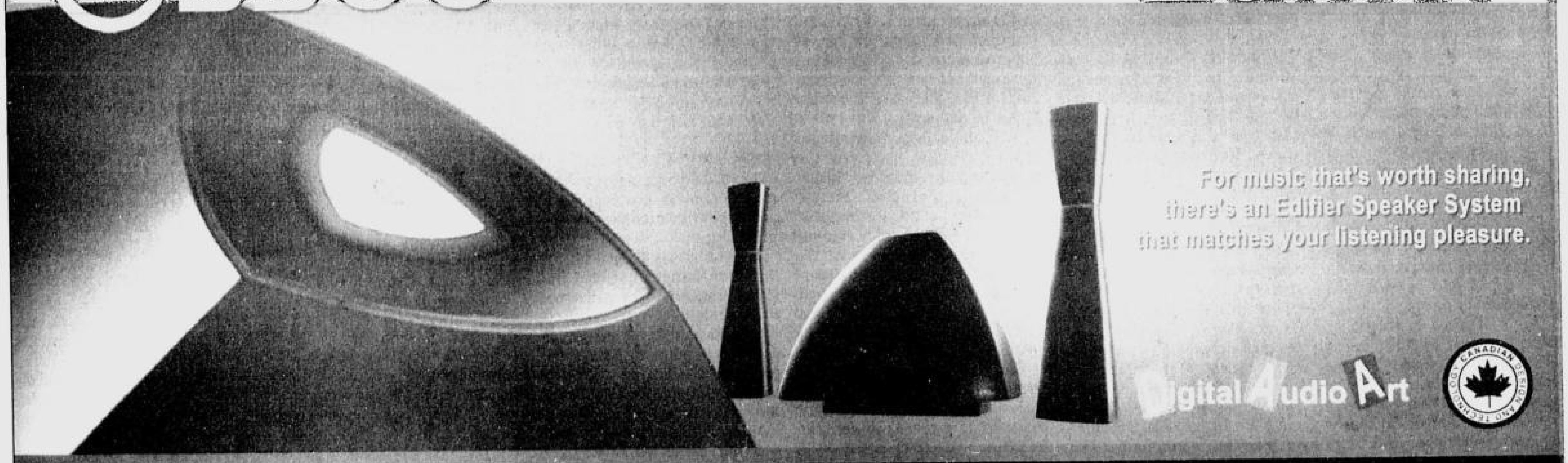
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'Free Ka Bel' protests hound GMA

By Michael Lim Ubac

BEFORE ENDING HER VISIT TO New Zealand, President Macapagal-Arroyo promised to end soon the Mindanao conflict involving Moro rebels.

But protests over Anakpawis Rep. Crispin "Ka Bel" Beltran's continued detention and the unabated political killings followed her to Waitangi town, where she, along with New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark and Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer, delivered keynote speeches at the opening ceremony of the 3rd Asia-Pacific Regional Interfaith Dialogue at the Waitaha Center of the Copthorne Hotel.

Ms Arroyo made a strong pitch for the promotion of an interfaith dialogue to bring about lasting peace, political stability and economic growth in Asia.

"In Mindanao, we have taken steps to bring interfaith forces to bear upon a peace process that has resulted in a three-year ceasefire and monumental strides in economic growth," she said, reassuring representatives of the free world that she would ensure that the human rights of even her harshest political critics would be respected.

She added: "I share with Prime Minister Clark a keen devotion to human rights, and I share her concern for putting an end to the political violence that has plagued the Philippines for generations.

"We have never condoned and we condemn the killing of journalists, party-list members, or activists. We live in a vibrant democracy that is validated through an electoral process that is free, fair and reflective of the people's will.

"We welcome the assistance of New Zealand as we have Europe and the international community at large to work with us in an open and transparent way to advance human rights in the Philippines and around the world."

Threatened arrest

In Manila, the militant labor group Kilusang Mayo Uno yesterday warned that activist Dennis Maga, who put himself inside a cage in Wellington, New Zealand, to dramatize protests against the Arroyo administration, might be arrested by authorities when he returns home on Saturday.

KMU international affairs secretary Ma. Theresa Dioquino said "reliable sources" had relayed the information to the group.

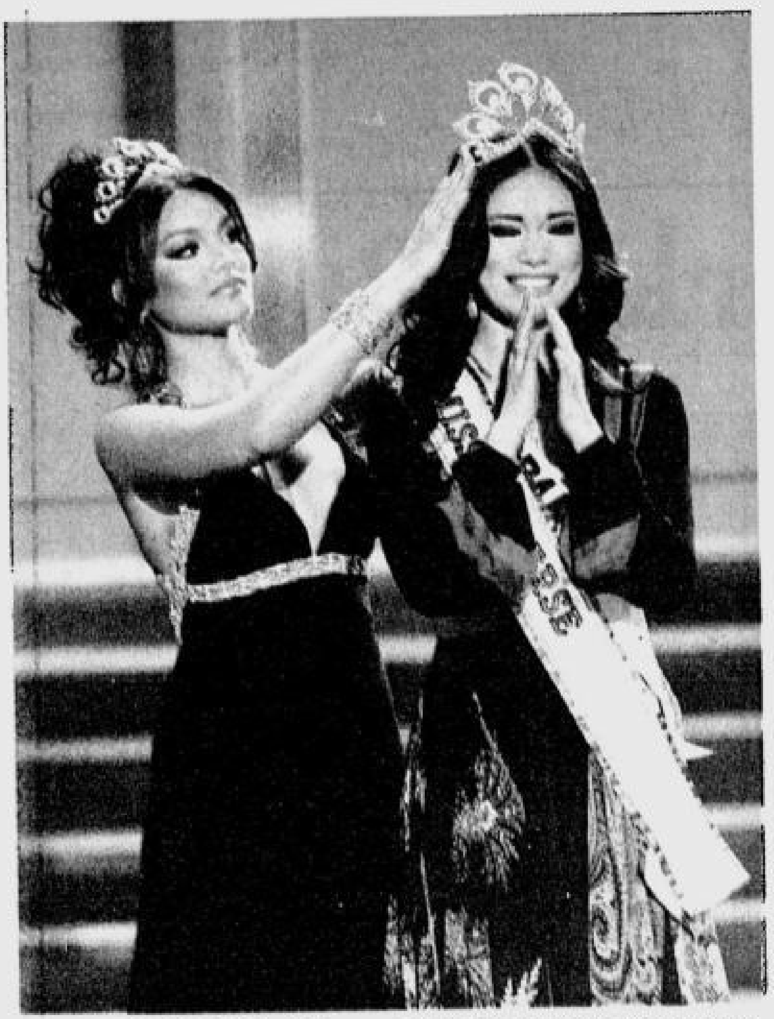
"Obviously, Ms Arroyo was embarrassed in New Zealand. That's why Malacañang is [preparing] to arrest Maga and further suppress the advocates of democracy," Dioquino said in a statement.

Maga is the spokesperson of the Free Ka Bel Movement and the secretary general of the Alliance of Nationalist and Genuine Labor Organizations, a KMU affiliate.

He was among the protesters who demonstrated against Ms Arroyo outside the New Zealand parliament. He was hosted by the workers group National Distribution Union (NDU) of New Zealand, which is also calling for Beltran's release.

Int'l media coverage

The young labor leader put himself inside a steel cage outside the parliament as his symbolic protest against the Philippine government's continued detention of Beltran. The incident was widely covered by the international media. *With a report from Jerome Aning*



RITE OF PASSAGE: Miss Universe 2006, Zuleyka Rivera Mendoza of Puerto Rico, crowns her successor, Miss Japan Riyo Mori. The crown of diamonds and pearls reportedly cost $250,000. AFP

Grandmother's dream comes true for Miss U

From page A1

Shizuoka at the base of Mount Fuji, won the cheers of the Mexico City audience when she opened her interview, saying 'Hola, Mexico!'

"I learned how to always be happy, be patient and to be positive, and this is what I want to teach to the next generation," she said during the interview competition.

'Amazing champion'

The daughter of a dance school operator, Mori said her grandmother had told her as a child that she wanted her to be Miss Japan before she turned 20.

"From the very beginning, I entered the competition with high hopes and an unswerving determination to make this dream a reality," she said in a pre-competition interview.

"Right now, I am only 20 years old, so I'm really excited about what I'm going to be able to do at this age to benefit society," Mori, who wants to someday open an international dance school in Tokyo, said after her victory.

The last time Japan won the pageant was in 1959 when Akiko Kojima became the first Miss Universe from Asia. Since then, several women from the region have worn the crown.

"She is an amazing champion, an amazing woman and I hear that they go totally insane in Japan, so that's good," said Donald Trump, who owns the pageant together with NBC. "This is one of the best shows that we have ever had."

Pride and pleasure

News of Mori's victory was flashed on television screens across Japan, sparking pride and pleasure amid a raft of bleak domestic news dominated by the suicide of Japan's scandal-tainted agriculture minister on Monday.

"I am happy that Japanese people's bodies have reached world standards, although I am sure she also worked hard on her inner self," said 39-year-old housewife Noriko Hasegawa, a judge at a male swimwear modelling contest coincidentally being held in Tokyo on Tuesday.

The triumph came after months of preparation by Mori, who said in a recent interview with Metropolis magazine in Tokyo that she had been to France to learn the right mannerisms and how to handle interviews.

After hearing from friends that Japanese women often seemed suppressed, Mori told the magazine that she wanted to show the world Japan also boasted "passionate women like me."

"My sincere congratulations," Shizuoka Mayor Zenkichi Kojima said in a message to Mori. "As the representative of the people of Shizuoka, I must tell you we are delighted. I hope you will make the world your stage and reach even greater heights."

Chances dimmed by fall

Smith, whose chances may have been dimmed by her fall, was booed during her interview. Several members of the audience chanted "Mexico! Mexico!" until she spoke in Spanish, saying "Buenas noches, Mexico. Muchas gracias!" which earned her applause.

Also finishing in the top five were second runner-up Ly Jonaitis of Venezuela and third runner-up Honey Lee of South Korea.

The winner travels the world for a year on behalf of charities and pageant sponsors.

The 15 finalists from a field of 77 contestants were announced early in Monday's show. They were picked last week during preliminary judging in the contest's swimsuit, evening gown and interview categories, but their names were not announced until Monday, allowing all 77 to be introduced to the television audience.

As soon as the final 15 had been selected, they immediately strutted across the stage in animal-print bikinis for the swimsuit competition to the music of Mexican pop group RBD.

After the evening gown competition, five more contestants were eliminated. The judges chose the winner from the remaining five finalists from Japan, Brazil, Venezuela, United States and South Korea.

Protests

Missing from this year's contest was Miss Sweden, whose country is one of the few to win the crown three times. Isabel Lestapier Winqvist, 20, dropped out because many Swedes say the competition does not represent the modern woman.

Hours before the pageant began, dozens of protesters held a mock ceremony in downtown Mexico City that featured "Miss Marijuana," "Miss Sexual Health" and "Miss Human Rights," and other candidates with obscenities written across their sashes. The group yelled "Neither ugly nor beautiful, should a woman be considered an object!"

Pageant organizers say the Miss Universe contest carefully selects women who are intelligent, well-mannered and cultured.

1999 Miss Teen USA Vanessa Minnillo and "Extra" weekend correspondent Mario Lopez hosted the live, two-hour telecast that was expected to be viewed by more than 600 million people in more than 180 countries.

Celebrity judges

The celebrity judges included actor James Kyson Lee, model Lindsay Clubine, Dallas Cowboys quarterback Tony Romo, rocker Dave Navarro, Olympic figure skating champion Michelle Kwan, celebrity hairstylist Ken Paves, fashion designer Marc Bouwer, "Project Runway" judge and Elle magazine fashion director Nina Garcia and former Miss Universe Dayanara Torres.

The pageant was last held in Mexico City in 1993, when Torres was crowned. *Reports from AP, AFP and Reuters*

New Zealand pours $1.23B ...

From page A1

products, mining and wood processing. An increased people-to-people exchange through tourism and education is also being explored.

Mangoes, carabao milk

Ms Arroyo said a deal to purchase Philippine mangoes, bananas, pineapples and dried banana chips could reach $30 million in one year, but Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap said the amount was just the initial figure.

About $150 million would go into mining and $50 million into wood processing.

Yap said New Zealand businessmen also wanted to make the Philippines not only the transshipment point but the processor of New Zealand timber (into furniture and construction materials) and even milk and dairy products.

He said the country could become New Zealand's rich source of carabao milk, which has a lower fat content than cow's milk.

High point

With these, Ms Arroyo and her delegation, composed of Cabinet members and Chinese-Filipino businessmen, saw a high point coming in the relations between the countries, which enjoyed a two-way trade of more than NZ$650 million in 2006.

Prime Minister Helen Clark told Ms Arroyo that she was looking into "new areas of cooperation in the future."

"The Philippines is important to us economically," she said, pointing out that the Philippines' greatest asset was its people.

Clark said the proposed free trade agreement among New Zealand, the Philippines and Australia "currently being negotiated may help open more doors, particularly in the areas of services and investment."

"We are short of skilled workers here, so we appreciate an increased flow of people to our country," she said in response to a question on the demand for Filipino workers in her country.

She said that from only 898 Filipinos who had secured migrant status between 2004 and 2005, the number had risen to 2,435 in 2006. The Filipino community in New Zealand has grown to more than 20,000 people.

"In other words, the numbers have virtually tripled, and they are almost entirely skilled people" who could easily seek employment because of "their extensive command of English," Clark said.

Mining in Nueva Vizcaya

Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes said Oceana Gold, a mining company owned by New Zealand and Australia, would step up its operations in Didipio, Nueva Vizcaya. But actual production of gold and copper would come by 2009, he said.

The firm is also involved in some exploration activities in Cagayan, Albay, Panay and Surigao, he said.

"Australia and New Zealand are very bullish about the Philippines not only in mining but in the wood industry," he said.

Reyes pointed out that New Zealand had acknowledged the Philippines' strategic location and, thus, it wanted to have its logs shipped here for processing into construction materials or furniture which, in turn, would be exported to Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan and Japan.

Tony Olison, president of the Wood Producers Association of the Philippines, told reporters that the $50-million investment only covered basic processing. A separate deal would be inked for finishing for furniture, or for special products.

"The New Zealanders are very excited about it. A lot of them are asking when can we start?" said Olison.

Donald Dee, president of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said that in the case of dairy, "we're looking at intercropping in our coconut plantations because it's important for the secondary income of farmers."

"So we intercrop coconut plantations with grass, and we bring in the buffalo—the carabaos—and also the cows. Then we will start our dairy program, which is tied to the nutrition program of the President for the schoolchildren," said Dee.

He hoped this could be the start of increased trade with New Zealand, saying that the New Zealanders' trust in the Philippine economy was due to "our financial performance."

"They really believe that the Philippines can be used as a platform for export to a third country," he said.

Dairy herd

Yap said he had "a good lunch" with the Fonterra Group, the biggest dairy company in New Zealand.

"We gave them something to think about. PM Helen Clark said that the fact that they are bursting at the seams right now in dairy, I guess they have to look for offshore sources for supplies," Yap said.

"What we are looking at with Fonterra right now is how we can build up the dairy herds in the Philippines and the supply of milk. Then they will come in and help us take a look at it and help us with the processing and the distribution," he said.

Yap said the Philippines had the flexibility of raising cows or carabaos for its dairy needs. "That's something they don't know but they obviously know what to do on the processing side," he said.

Another militant farmer ...

From page A1

chapter of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, was abducted by at least six armed men from his house in Barangay Bunducan at around 10 p.m. on Monday, said Karapatan-Batangas secretary general Dina Capetillo.

According to Capetillo, Samonteza was an active member of Karapatan and had joined fact-finding missions in Nasugbu and nearby towns in Batangas.

Warrant of arrest

Supt. Jojo Pumida, Nasugbu police chief, said operatives of the Regional Intelligence Division of the Calabarzon police arrested Samonteza on the strength of a warrant issued in connection with a case of attempted murder filed 10 years ago.

But Capetillo said the men who took Samonteza did not present a warrant of arrest to the members of his family who were with him at the time.

"The armed men did not even identify themselves. We believe this is again part of the extrajudicial operations of the military to suppress those who speak against the excesses of the Arroyo administration," Capetillo told the INQUIRER by phone.

"We condemn in the strongest terms this latest atrocity of the military against the peace-loving residents of Nasugbu who are sick and tired of the lies they peddle and the abuses they commit against the people," she said.

On Sunday, Pastor Berlin Guerrero of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines was forcibly taken by a group of men in Biñan, Laguna.

Cavite police later admitted having custody of Guerrero. They said he was arrested on the basis of two warrants of arrest for inciting to sedition and murder charges.

Air Force

Capetillo said operatives of the 730th Combat Wing of the Philippine Air Force were behind Samonteza's abduction.

She said Karapatan was told that the armed men who took Samonteza had brought him to the PAF camp in Barangay Palico, Nasugbu.

Reached by phone, however, Lt. Col. Manny Gonzales, commander of the 730th Combat Wing, denied having taken Samonteza.

"I don't know where that report came from. We did not arrest anybody. If we did, we would have told the media about it. If you want, you can check our camp here," Gonzales told the INQUIRER.

Supt. Primitivo Tabujara, intelligence chief of the Calabarzon police, initially said Samonteza was actually taken by PAF personnel and was undergoing tactical interrogation in a military camp in Batangas.

But later in a text message, Tabujara said the farmer was arrested by his men led by a certain Insp. Leovino Ricablanca and Capt. Arnel Baccay of the 300th PAF Intelligence Services Group.

He also said that contrary to Gonzales' statement, members of the 730th Combat Wing were among those who made the arrest, and that Samonteza was now with the PAF intelligence unit based in Batangas.

'Legal' arrest

Nasugbu police chief Pumida said Samonteza was charged 10 years ago with attempted murder in Bunducan.

He said it was Judge Wilfredo Mayor of Nasugbu Regional Trial Court Branch 14 who had issued the warrant.

Pumida said the arrest was legal: "The intelligence agents even coordinated with us regarding their operation. That abduction story is just an allegation."

While Pumida said Samonteza was not suspected of being a communist rebel and his arrest had nothing to do with his connections with any leftist group, Tabujara said the farmer was actually a member of the Guerrilla Front Committee of the communist-led New People's Army.

In a text message, Tabujara said Samonteza was known as Ka Lando or Ka Dino and belonged to "an unknown SYP operating in the area of the first district of Batangas."

An SYP, or Sandatahang Yunit Pampropaganda, is an armed unit of the NPA engaged in organizing people in the countryside.

Capetillo said Samonteza's family feared for his safety. She said the farmer might be suffering physical and mental torture in the hands of his captors.

Police probe

Alarmed that Cavite lawmen might have violated police procedures, the leadership of the Philippine National Police said it would investigate the arrest of Pastor Guerrero.

In a statement, Director Geary Barias, chief of the PNP Directorate for Investigation and Detective Management, said he had been instructed by PNP Director General Oscar Calderon to look into the matter.

Karapatan had reported that Guerrero was forced into a van by a group of armed men on Sunday. The group turned out to be Cavite policemen and operatives of the Naval Intelligence and Security Force.

Barias said the PNP would look into allegations and reports that Cavite police did not coordinate with Laguna police, that the arresting officers used a vehicle with no license plates, and that the lawmen did not initially identify themselves as policemen.

"All these things we will investigate" he said, adding:

"Granting that it was a legitimate police operation to serve a lawful order from the court, it appears from all indications that there was something amiss as far as the observance of police operational procedures was concerned, particularly the manner of serving the warrant of arrest and effecting the arrest."

Guerrero is a former secretary general of the militant Bagong Alyansang Makabayan in Southern Tagalog.

On Monday, Region 4-A police commander Chief Supt. Nicasio Radovan confirmed that Guerrero was in the custody of the Cavite police.

Radovan also said a grenade, a laptop computer and personal effects had been seized from Guerrero.

'Gestapo-style'

Neri Colmenares, general counsel and third nominee of the party-list group Bayan Muna, assailed the PNP for the "Gestapo-style" arrest of Guererro.

"Pastor Guerrero is a victim of police brutality, of a terrible violation of his rights. He must be freed immediately to the warm embrace of his family," Colmenares said in a statement.

Colmenares argued that the arrest was "illegal at almost every step."

"The four abductors were not in uniform. They did not introduce themselves as officers of the law. They used guns, pointed them at [Guerrero], and one of the assailants hit the pastor in the nape. They then dragged him to one of the vans with covered plates," said the lawyer.

"If this is not an abduction, we do not know what it is. It cannot even pass as a legitimate arrest or serving of a warrant under the Revised Rules of Criminal Procedure," he said.

Total of 25 church people

At least 25 church people, including 10 pastors and priests, were among the 864 activists summarily executed since President Macapagal-Arroyo took office in 2001, according to the National Council of Churches in the Philippines and Karapatan.

As of May 15, 196 activists were missing, Karapatan said. *With reports from Alcuin Papa in Manila; Marlon Alexander Luistro and Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC AND INVESTORS OF THE HAMILO COAST PROJECT OF SM INVESTMENTS CORPORATION

DURING THE MARCH 22, 2007 LAUNCHING OF THE HAMILO COAST PROJECT LOCATED AT HACIENDA LOOC, NASUGBU BATANGAS, SM INVESTMENTS CORPORATION (SMIC) ANNOUNCED THAT:

1. THE PROPERTIES IN PHASE I OF THE HAMILO COAST PROJECT ARE NOT COVERED BY ADVERSE CLAIMS.

2. THE ADVERSE CLAIMS ANNOTATED BY CARMONA REALTY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION OVER SOME OF THE PROPERTIES COVERED BY THE HAMILO COAST PROJECT HAVE ALREADY LAPSED AND ARE NOT VALID AND SUBSISTING.

THESE STATEMENTS ARE FALSE.

THE TRUTH IS THAT:

1. TCT NO. 108973 AND TCT NO. 108974 ISSUED BY THE REGISTRY OF DEEDS OF NASUGBU, BATANGAS, WHICH FORM PART OF PHASE I OF THE HAMILO COAST PROJECT, ARE COVERED BY ADVERSE CLAIMS.

2. THE ADVERSE CLAIMS ANNOTATED BY CARMONA REALTY AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION ON 2,700 HECTARES OUT OF THE 5,800 HECTARES COVERED BY THE HAMILO COAST PROJECT AROSE FROM THE FAILURE AND REFUSAL OF SM INVESTMENTS CORPORATION, MANILA SOUTHCOAST DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (MSDC) AND THEIR AFFILIATE COMPANIES TO FULLY PAY THE DISTURBANCE COMPENSATION OF THE FARMERS WHO HELD THE CERTIFICATES OF LAND OWNERSHIP (CLOA'S) OVER SAID PROPERTIES, AS WELL AS MSDC'S FAILURE AND REFUSAL TO COMPLY WITH ITS CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS. THE ISSUANCE OF NEW TITLES TO MSDC, AN SMIC AFFILIATE, IS IRREGULAR AND IMPROPER SINCE SEVERAL OF THESE FARMERS WHO WERE THE REGISTERED OWNERS OF AT LEAST 2,000 HECTARES COVERED BY THE HAMILO COAST PROJECT HAVE NOT YET SURRENDERED THEIR OWNER'S DUPLICATE CERTIFICATES OF TITLES (CLOA'S) TO THE REGISTRY OF DEEDS BECAUSE THEY HAVE NOT YET BEEN FULLY PAID THEIR DISTURBANCE COMPENSATION, AS REQUIRED BY LAW AND STATED IN THE MARCH 10, 1998 COURT ORDER IN DARAB CASE NO. IV-Ba-3468.

3. THE ADVERSE CLAIMS ANNOTATED BY CARMONA REALTY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION ON AT LEAST 11 TITLES WHICH FORM PART OF THE 5,800 HECTARE HAMILO COAST PROJECT REMAIN VALID AND SUBSISTING AND HAVE NOT YET BEEN CANCELLED IN COURT. IN THE CASE OF SAJONAS V. CA (258 SCRA 79) AND DIAZ-DUARTE VS. ONG (298 SCRA 388), THE SUPREME COURT RULED THAT A NOTICE OF ADVERSE CLAIM REMAINS VALID AND SUBSISTING EVEN AFTER THE LAPSE OF THE 30-DAY PERIOD AND CONTINUES AS A LIEN UPON THE PROPERTY UNTIL SUCH TIME THAT IT IS CANCELLED BY A COURT ORDER.

THE PUBLIC AND PROSPECTIVE INVESTORS ARE, THEREFORE, ADVISED TO TAKE THE PROPER STEPS TO ASCERTAIN AND VERIFY THAT THE PROPERTIES IN THE HAMILO COAST PROJECT THAT THEY WILL BE PURCHASING FROM SM INVESTMENTS CORPORATION OR ANY OF ITS AFFILIATES, PARTNERS AND AGENTS ARE NOT PART OF THE 2,700 HECTARES WHICH ARE COVERED BY SAID ADVERSE CLAIMS.

MAY 30, 2007, MAKATI CITY.

ONGKIKO KALAW MANHIT & ACORDA LAW OFFICES
Counsel of Carmona Realty & Development Corporation
4TH FLOOR, CGB CONDOMINIUM, 101 AGUIRRE STREET
LEGASPI VILLAGE, MAKATI CITY

ADVT

Rehab center strikes back at NBI

By Volt Contreras

THE DRUG REHABILITATION CENTER THAT WAS RAIDED by agents of the National Bureau of Investigation last Friday to "rescue" Carol Castañeda-Jimenez, wife of former Manila Rep. Mark Jimenez, struck back with a string of criminal complaints yesterday at the Office of the Ombudsman.

Silvercrest Foundation executive director Ma. Teresa Diana B. Crespo and security chief Alvin Pacheco, both claiming to have sustained injuries during the raid, questioned "the very chaotic manner" of the NBI operation and the "void" court order on which it was based.

Their 15-page complaint, included as respondents, the NBI raiding team led by Arnel Dalumpines, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, NBI Director Nestor Mantaring, Pasig City Regional Trial Court Judge Lorifel Pahimna, Carol's lawyer Lorna Kapunan and Jimenez' son Virgilio Crespo.

The complaint was for grave coercion, grave threats, qualified trespass to dwelling, slight physical injuries, malicious mischief, and violation of the antigraft law.

In a statement, Silvercrest counsel Wilfredo Garrido said his clients are challenging the legality of the "rescue order" issued by Pahimna and instigated by Kapunan and Crespo, and as carried out "upon the authority" of Gonzalez and Mantaring.

Garrido wondered whether such an order has a precedence, saying "its closest counterpart is a temporary restraining order or a writ of preliminary injunction. But even such orders are never issued without notice or hearing."

The lawyer noted how the raid authorized by Pahimna was conducted with "unreasonable force in the dead of the night, resulting in injuries" to Diana Crespo and Pacheco.

The order was issued "by a judge who has invented a species of legal process that is not in the books," Silvercrest said in a separate statement.

The 10-year-old foundation said the raid endangered the lives of its patients.

At around 9:30 p.m. Friday, NBI agents barged into the Silvercrest facility—which also served as Diana Crespo's home—in Las Piñas City, to pluck out Carol, Mark Jimenez's second wife. She had been confined in the center since May 18 after eight men allegedly abducted her in Makati City.

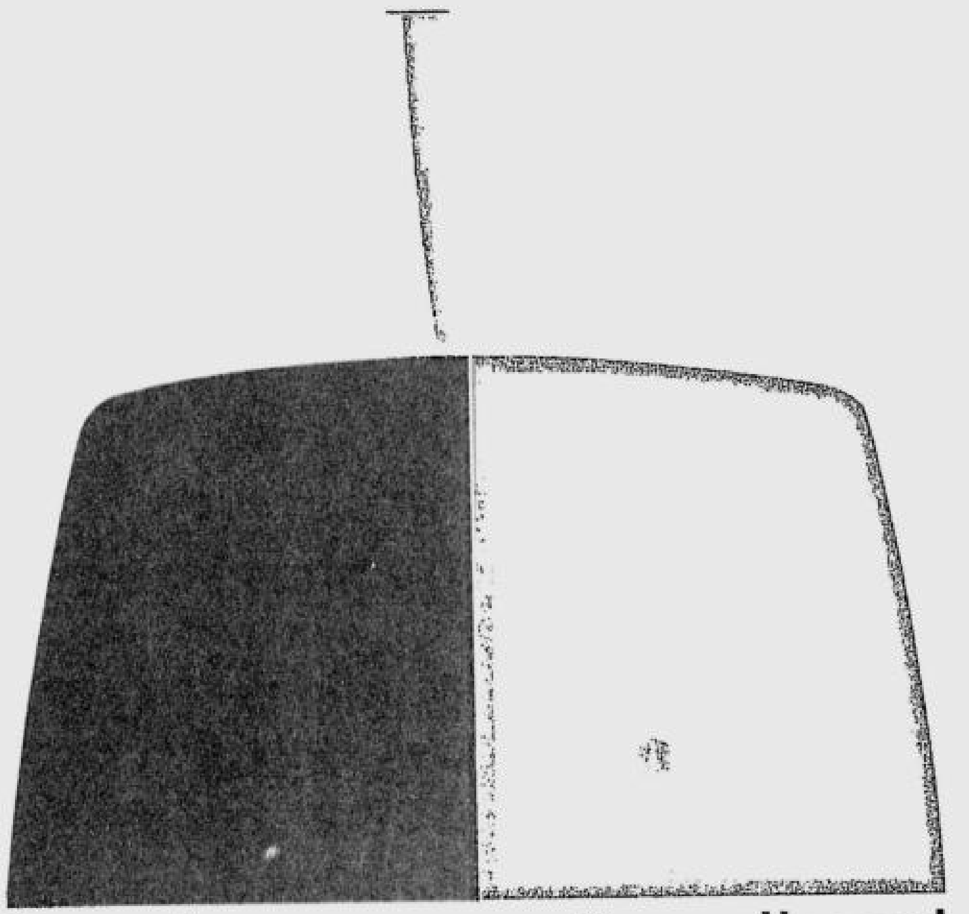
In yesterday's complaint, Crespo said between 20 and 30 agents forced their way into Silvercrest just after the neighborhood experienced a brownout.

They used a bolt cutter to break through the gate.

They allegedly manhandled one of the guards, Edwin Umpad, and also punched Pacheco on his left torso when both tried to inquire about their intrusion.

Crespo said she was bodily dragged outside the premises and made to sign a document with two agents pointing their guns at her back, while Pacheco said he was forced at gunpoint to disclose Carol's room.

Crespo said Kapunan and her (Diana's) cousin, Virgilio Crespo, were with the raiding team.



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RP assails continued detention of Suu Kyi

THE PHILIPPINES SAID IT "DEEPLY regrets" the decision of Burma (Myanmar) to extend the house arrest of opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

While Burma has expressed its full adherence to its so-called "roadmap to democracy," the decision to extend the house arrest of the prodemocracy leader reflected the Burmese government's "unwillingness to demonstrate its genuine commitment to full democratization and national reconciliation," Romulo said.

The statement was a rare act of criticism from the Philippines for a fellow Asean member.

Reports said the extension of Suu Kyi's house arrest followed the appointment of a new prime minister, Soe Win.

"The Philippines joins the call for the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and all political prisoners," Romulo said as he urged the Burmese junta to reconsider and lift Suu Kyi's house arrest.

Impediment to democracy

"We believe this will enable the Myanmar government to engage all of its stakeholders in inclusive and constructive dialogue towards nation-building at the soonest possible time. We also believe that this will help hasten the attainment of a truly caring and sharing Asean community," he said.

Romulo said that extending Suu Kyi's house arrest was an impediment to the achievement of the seven-step road map to democracy, that includes elections under a new constitution, announced in 2003 by then Prime Minister Gen. Khin Nyunt.

Romulo had made a three-day visit to Burma last year and unsuccessfully sought a meeting with Suu Kyi.

Military generals, who have ruled Burma since 1962, crushed prodemocracy demonstrations in 1988 and two years later rejected the results of national elections won by Suu Kyi's National League of Democracy.

Suu Kyi has been held since May 2003 after clashes between her supporters and progovernment forces in northern Burma.

Nobel laureate

The 1991 Nobel peace laureate has been detained in her lakeside villa since September 2003. She was first detained in May that year, spending some months in the Insein jail, then receiving medical treatment for a gynecological condition, before being confined to her home.

Suu Kyi celebrates her 62nd birthday on June 19 while serving her third year of house arrest. She is not allowed to see family members, friends and other visitors.

Burma and the Philippines are members of the 10-nation Asean that also includes Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

But military-ruled Burma, which joined Asean in 1997, has embarrassed the regional bloc by refusing to introduce democratic reforms.

Asean is pursuing a policy of "constructive engagement" to encourage Burma to democratize. But this has led to friction with the United States and the European Union, which impose sanctions on the military regime.

In a statement issued in January, Asean leaders encouraged Burma to "make greater progress toward national reconciliation."

They called for the release of detainees but did not name Suu Kyi.

The United Nations has estimated there are more than 1,100 other political prisoners in Burma. *Cynthia D. Balana and AFP*

VENDETTA ANGLE EYED

Man dies in car shop shooting; wife hurt

By Tina G. Santos

A CAR SHOP MANAGER WAS KILLED while his pregnant wife remains in critical condition after they were shot by one of three motorcycle-riding armed men in Manila yesterday morning.

Police identified the fatality as Armando Galicia, 54, of Jorge Bocobo Street, Malate. He died on the spot after sustaining a gunshot wound in the head. His wife, Irish, 27, who is seven months pregnant, remains under observation at the Ospital ng Maynila for a gunshot wound in the shoulder that exited from her back, police said.

Chief Insp. Alejandro Yanquiling, head of the Manila Police District homicide division, said the incident happened around 11:15 a.m. inside the garage of a car repair shop on Arellano Avenue, Malate.

Galicia was inside a white Tamaraw FX when one of the suspects, who posed as a customer, approached him and shot him in the head without provocation. The two other suspects acted as lookouts, police said.

Upon hearing the gunshot, Irish went out to check but she, too was fired upon by the suspect. The two were reportedly stay-ins at the auto center.

Armed with .45 caliber pistols, the suspects immediately fled toward Makati City after the shooting.

Yanquiling said they were still conducting further investigation to determine the motive behind the shooting incident. He surmised, however, that personal vendetta could be one motive.

The police official said they were also looking into Galicia's background as he also allegedly moonlighted as a casino financier.

"He took in vehicles for pawn purposes," Yanquiling said. "Some problems could have cropped up as a result of these transactions."

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Police ready for Metro schools opening

By Julie M. Aurelio

NEXT WEEK, EXPECT MORE THAN the usual number of policemen out in the streets patrolling neighborhoods and areas close to schools in Metro Manila.

Deputy Director General Reynaldo Varilla, National Capital Region Police Office chief, yesterday ordered the deployment of over 2,000 cops as part of security preparations for the resumption of classes next week.

"We will be on heightened alert as early as June 3 since schools open the following day," Varilla said.

Under the NCRPO's "Oplan Balik Paaralan 2007," 2,667 uniformed and plainclothes policemen will keep watch over Metro Manila's 1,275 schools, most of which are located in Quezon City and Manila.

Varilla added that policemen will also be deployed in the vicinity of Chinese-Filipino schools to prevent possible incidents of kidnapping.

"Security will be very strict. Students will not be allowed to go out of their schools unless their designated *'sundo'* (fetcher) is there," Varilla said. The increased police visibility is meant to deter criminals from preying on students as they go back to the classroom.

In anticipation of the heavy traffic, Varilla added that they have also asked traffic enforcers and personnel from the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority to help out in the back-to-school program.

"We are also setting up police assistance centers near schools to help students who are lost," the police official said.

The police have identified three areas in Manila where students are vulnerable to criminals: The University Belt on Morayta Street and España, Taft Avenue and Intramuros.

"I have also directed our district directors to coordinate with school officials to identify their school's security concerns as classes resume," he added.

Policemen will be also deployed to Divisoria, where many parents usually buy school supplies for their children.

"I wish to assure the public that their policemen are there for them," Varilla said.

3 robbery suspects killed in QC shootout

By Jeannette I. Andrade

THREE MEN SAID TO BE MEMBERS of a robbery gang preying on passengers of jeepneys and buses were killed in a shootout yesterday with policemen in Quezon City.

Only one of the three men, Bong Asistio, the alleged leader of the Asistio Gang, had been named at press time.

Asistio was identified by JO1 Randy Ilagan, of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology, who happened to have recognized the suspect when he passed by the site of the encounter.

Ilagan told the INQUIRER that Asistio was a member of the Sigue-Sigue Sputnik Gang and a former *"mayor"* or leader of a group of inmates at the Manila City Jail for 10 years, where he was detained on several charges of murder and robbery.

Asistio was later transferred to the Metro Manila District Jail in Bicutan, Taguig City until his release on probation six months ago.

Two of the suspects, including Asistio, were killed instantly while the third man was declared dead on arrival at the East Avenue Medical Center. The police recovered three .38 caliber revolvers and a fan knife from the three men.

Quezon City Police District chief, Senior Supt. Magtanggol Gatdula said that prior to the incident yesterday morning, members of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Unit received a tip that members of the gang was on the lookout for would-be victims on Sgt. Emilio Rivera in Quezon City, which is connected to C-3 Road in Caloocan City.

When CIDU members went to the area, they chanced upon the suspects who opened fire on them. Gatdula said his men were forced to fire back, killing the three men.

"We are making Quezon City dangerous for criminals. We want them to leave the city," Gatdula added, attributing yesterday's operation to the crackdown on robbery groups following the killing of Makati deputy police chief, Supt. Jovem Bocalbos in a robbery on Commonwealth Avenue last week.

Bocalbos, who was moonlighting as a passenger van driver, was shot by five armed men who held up his passengers.

DID YOU KNOW

THE OFFICE of the Ombudsman's main duty is to protect the citizenry from abuses committed by government officials and employees. Its five major functions are public assistance, graft prevention, investigation, prosecution and administrative adjudication. Its disciplinary authority, however, does not cover members of Congress and the judiciary, and impeachable officials. The office was created by an executive order in July 1987. But it became operational only in May 1988, upon the appointment of an Ombudsman. The Office of the Ombudsman is on Agham Road, Diliman in Quezon City. *Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research*

Transport groups agree to postpone fare hike—only if fuel prices remain stable

By Riza T. Olchondra

JEEPNEY GROUPS YESTERDAY INformed the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) that they would agree to defer a proposal to restore the minimum fare to P7.50 only if the agency initiates moves to stop the continued rise of fuel prices.

The areas affected by the proposal are the National Capital Region, Central Luzon and Southern Tagalog.

The current minimum fare in these areas is P7, brought about by the 50-centavo rollback imposed by the LTFRB last year because of stable oil prices.

Jeepney groups Acto (Alliance of Concerned Transport Organization), Altodap (Alliance of Transport Operators and Drivers Association of the Philippines), Pasang Masda (Pangkalahatang Sanggunian Manila and Suburbs Drivers' Association Nationwide Inc.), Fejodap (Federation of Jeepney Operators and Drivers Association of the Philippines), and Piston (Pinagkaisang Samahan ng mga Tsuper at Operators Nationwide) held a dialogue with LTFRB Chair Thompson Lantion on Monday.

At the meeting, the transport groups urged the agency to take action against further oil price hikes after Lantion told them that he would not approve their petition at the moment because it would add to the burden of parents this school opening.

"Piston told Chairman Lantion that concrete steps must be taken for the government to immediately stop the (so-called) oil cartel in its weekly oil price hikes if the LTFRB wants us to agree to the proposal to postpone the restoration of the minimum fare to P7.50 until after classes open," said George San Mateo, spokesperson for the group.

Piston also pointed out that since January, Shell, Chevron and Petron have raised prices of gasoline and diesel six times.

METROBRIEFS

Double whammy for vice mayor

PASAY Vice Mayor Arvin Tolentino, who lost in the vice mayoral race, reported to the police the other day that he lost nearly P1 million in cash to his cousin who allegedly stole his ATM and credit cards. Tolentino told PO3 Nestor Rubel of the city police's investigation division that his cousin, Engimar Tolentino, who lived in his house, took his Citibank ATM card (dollar account) and credit card on May 13. Several days later, the vice mayor said he went to the bank and discovered that $15,000 was withdrawn from his account while a cash advance of P200,000 was taken from his credit card. *Hershey D. Homol*

Beauty salon in Pasig robbed

THREE armed men held up the customers of a beauty salon in Pasig City just before noon yesterday, leaving with a loot of P30,000. Supt. Frank Uyami, city police chief, said the suspects barged inside the Ricky Reyes salon on M. Concepcion, St. in Barangay San Joaquin and took the cash and valuables of two employees and five customers. No one was reported killed or hurt in the incident. The armed suspects immediately left on board two motorcycles, Uyami said, citing the police's initial report. *Kristine L. Alave*

Shabu witness' case transferred

THE KIDNAPPING with murder case of shabu mart witness Samer Palao was raffled off yesterday to Judge Aida Rangel-Roque of the Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 25. The Supreme Court recently ordered the transfer of the case from Marawi City after Palao said that his life would be in "grave and imminent danger" should he be tried there. The main witness against alleged shabu market operator Amin Imam Boratong, Palao is accused of abducting and killing the brother of Boratong's wife, Memie. He is detained at the Philippine National Police headquarters in Camp Crame. Palao said Boratong wields a lot of influence in Lanao del Sur because he was the alleged leader of a drug syndicate in the area. *Allison W. Lopez*

Astro Camp set June 2

A SUMMER-END activity dubbed "Astro Camp" will be hosted on June 2 by the Seven Suites Hotel Observatory in Antipolo City. The overnight activity is designed to introduce children aged 7-13 to the science of astronomy and the solar system. The registration and joining fee is P890 per participant, covering breakfast, lunch and dinner; a seminar with Seven Suites' in-house astronomer; a film showing; educational games and prizes for the winners. Parents or guardians who will accompany their kids overnight may avail of a 50-percent discount on the accommodation rate, valid only on the day itself. For inquiries, call 6820330, 6822076 or 0917-8179111; e-mail sevensuites@yahoo.com.ph or visit www.sevensuites.net.

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CONFERENCE (Tentative Topics)

DAY 1, JULY 10, TUESDAY

OPERATIONS TRACK	PEOPLE TRACK	SOLUTIONS TRACK	CAREER DEVELOPMENT TRACK	CAPTIVES TRACK
Driving operational excellence	Understanding the Gen Y career psyche	Collaborating with IT: What every call center manager needs to know	How to take your call center career to the top of the heap	How to overhaul your call center: When, why, and how to switch directions
Expanding to value-added services	Raising your call center's profile	Open source and IP telephony	Effective supervision and projection	Goodbye costs, hello profits: Transforming from a cost center a profit center
Using knowledge management in your center	Alternative recruitment options	Extreme makeover: Call center technology management's new look	What is your LQ? Finding and using your Leadership Quotient	Maximizing your infrastructure
An introduction to Six Sigma for contact centers	Implementing an employee development program	Business continuity and disaster recovery planning	Setting up your team	Mixing and managing in-house and outsourced customer service services

Topics are subject to change without prior notice.

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US, Iran trade blame over Iraq

BAGHDAD—THE UNITED STATES and Iran traded accusations over the bloodshed in Iraq on Monday during the first high-level direct official talks between the archfoes in 27 years.

US ambassador to Iraq Ryan Crocker accused Iran of fomenting unrest in the country by funneling weapons and training to extremist militias, and called on Tehran to live up to its promises to support stability.

His Iranian counterpart Hassan Kazemi Qomi, however, accused the US military of not doing enough to arm Iraqi government forces and said the Islamic republic was prepared to step in and do this itself.

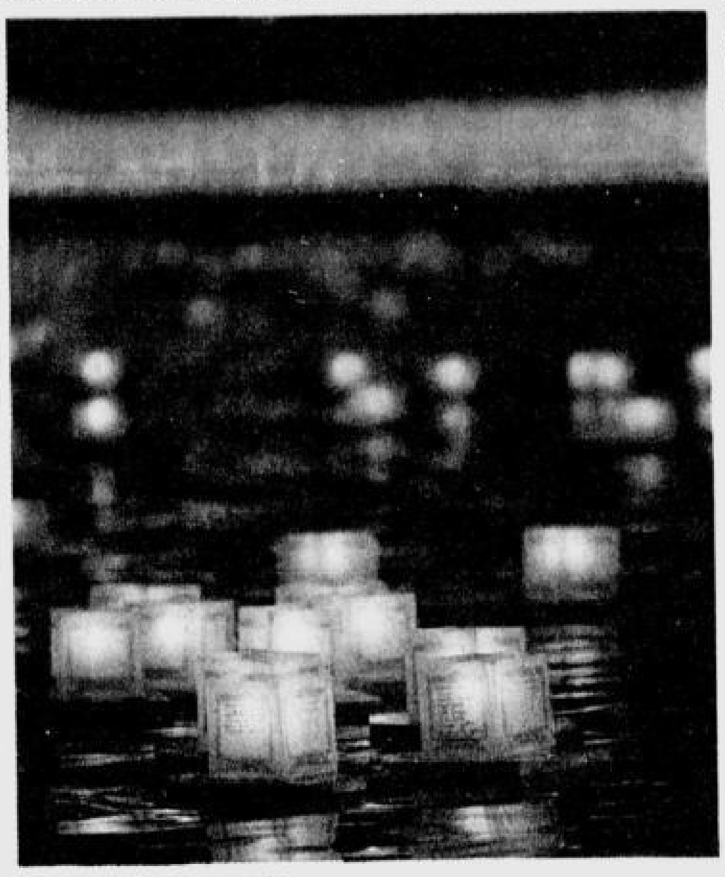
The first such encounter since the two countries severed diplomatic ties in 1980 lasted four hours, and afterwards Iran's envoy sounded keener on holding further talks than his US counterpart.

Crocker said he had insisted that Iran must back up its stated support for Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's beleaguered government by halting its backing for armed factions fighting in Iraq.

"The purpose of our efforts in this meeting was not to build a legal case—presumably the Iranians know what they were doing—our point was simply to say what we know as well; this is dangerous for Iraq," he said.

The Iranians proposed creating a trilateral security commission involving Iraqis and US representatives—a suggestion the US ambassador appeared to dismiss.

"What we are doing today effectively was a security committee because on the level of policy there isn't a great deal to argue about," he said. *AFP*



BUDDHIST RITUAL
Lanterns float on the water during the Japanese ceremony "Toro Nagashi" in Honolulu on May 28. The ritual honors victims of war, famine and other natural disasters. REUTERS

Russia calls for urgent meeting on arms treaty

MOSCOW—RUSSIA ON MONDAY requested an emergency conference to discuss an arms control pact after accusing Nato nations of ignoring the deal negotiated in the months after the Cold War ended.

Last month, President Vladimir Putin froze Moscow's commitments under the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty and said Russia could totally quit it altogether if Russia-Nato council failed to find a solution suitable to Moscow.

"Russia, on May 28, approached the Netherlands, the depositary of the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty, with a request to call an emergency conference on June 12 to 15 in Vienna," Russia's Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

The statement did not specify what Russia was planning to propose at the Vienna conference, but its move could further strain relations with the United States already soured by a row over US plans to build a missile shield in eastern Europe.

Moscow opposes the scheme to base 10 missile interceptors in Poland and radar in the Czech Republic from 2012 to head off what Washington sees as a threat from Iran and North Korea.

US President George W. Bush will meet Putin at the G8 summit of world leaders in Germany on June 6 to 8 and is due to visit the Czech Republic and Poland while he is in Europe.

Putin cited the US plan as the last straw which pushed him to freeze Moscow's CFE commitments, however, Russia's chief of general staff Gen. Yuri Baluyevsky said later it was not directly linked.

The CFE pact, originally signed in 1990 and updated in 1999, limits the number of battle tanks, heavy artillery, combat aircraft and attack helicopters deployed and stored between the Atlantic and Russia's Ural mountains.

But after the Soviet Union collapsed and most of its Warsaw Pact allies became Nato members, the CFE treaty—still described by officials as a cornerstone of security in Europe—became a largely symbolic document.

The Western partners refuse to ratify the CFE until Russia pulls out its bases from Georgia and Moldova, as it had promised when the treaty was reviewed in Istanbul in 1999.

Russia, which is already in the process of pulling out from Georgia, says the issue of bases is not part of the CFE and accuses the West of artificially linking the two issues.

Moscow argues, unhappy about Nato's expansion eastwards, says US plans to open bases for several thousand soldiers in Romania and Bulgaria this year are in breach of the CFE. *Reuters*

Chavez shuts down main opposition TV station

CARACAS—HOURS AFTER PRESident Hugo Chavez shut down Venezuela's main opposition broadcaster, his government demanded an investigation of news network Globovision on Monday for allegedly inciting an assassination attempt on the leftist leader.

Chavez took Radio Caracas Television, or RCTV, off the air at midnight on Sunday and replaced it with a state-run channel to promote his socialist programs. The move sparked international condemnation and accusations from the opposition that he was undermining democracy in the OPEC nation.

Protests over the closure of RCTV, Venezuela's oldest private channel, simmered in several Venezuelan cities on Monday. In some locations, the police used tear gas to disperse the crowds.

Seizing on the momentum of RCTV's closure, Communications Minister Willian Lara presented a case to the state prosecutor's office saying experts hired by the ministry had found that opposition broadcaster Globovision was inciting assassination attempts on Chavez.

As evidence, he cited Globovision showing footage of an assassination attempt against Pope John Paul II in 1981 accompanied by the song "This Does Not Stop Here," sung by Ruben Blades, now Panama's minister of tourism.

"The conclusion of the specialists … is that (in this segment) they are inciting the assassination of the president of Venezuela," Lara told reporters at the prosecutor's office.

Globovision was not immediately available to respond to the government's charge, but one of its reporters at the prosecutor's office said the footage was taken out of context.

The journalist said Globovision had been showing archive footage from RCTV accompanied by songs with a farewell theme the week before RCTV's closure.

At a Caracas news conference, Benoit Hervieu, Americas director at Reporters Without Borders, said: "Yesterday we saw the takeover of the principal media critical of President Chavez … Besides Globovision, what television media is left that can criticize the government of Mister Chavez?"

Chavez's reforms, since he assumed the presidency in 1999, have given him greater control over the country's judiciary, the military and the oil sector. *Reuters*

Japanese man is oldest to climb Mount Everest

TOKYO—A RETIRED JAPANESE teacher aged 71 has become the world's oldest person to climb to the top of Mount Everest, according to a mountaineering group here on Tuesday.

The Japan Mountaineering Association said Katsusuke Yanagisawa reached the top of the world's highest mountain on May 22.

He said he enjoyed a sunny breeze at the top for 30 minutes.

"It was a fantastic feeling," Yanagisawa told the Shinano Mainichi Shimbun, his hometown newspaper, from a hotel in Kathmandu after the descent.

"I was glad to reach the summit because, after that, all that was left was to climb down."

Yanagisawa, who lives in the central mountain city of Nagano, beat a record set the previous year by a compatriot.

"We have been told that Mr. Katsusuke Yanagisawa of Nagano reached the summit and became the oldest person to reach there," said a spokesperson for the Japan Mountaineering Association.

Previously the oldest climber to reach the highest point on the planet was Takao Arayama, who was 70 when he reached the 8,848-meter (29,198 foot) summit in May 2006.

Yanagisawa said he went with a team including New Zealanders and Japanese who scaled the mountain from the Tibetan side of Everest.

He reached Kathmandu on Monday and will file paperwork to claim his record. *AFP*

Human antibodies neutralize fatal bird flu virus, says study

PARIS—RESEARCHERS IN Switzerland have successfully immunized mice against the H5N1 strain of bird flu using human antibodies taken from survivors of the deadly virus, according to a study released on Tuesday.

The antibodies, reproduced at the Institute for Research in Biomedicine, also vastly enhanced the survival rate of infected animals, pointing the way to a treatment for people stricken with the often lethal disease, said Antonio Lanzavecchia, coauthor of the study and director of the Institute's immune regulation laboratory.

"We are very confident that this data can be reproduced in humans," he told AFP, saying that the antibodies "provided immediate, short-term immunity" in mice.

The H5N1 bird flu has killed millions of wild and domestic fowl across the world since it first emerged in the late 1990s, and has caused 185 fatalities out of 306 known cases—most since 2003—in humans, according to the World Health Organization.

Experts fear that the virus could mutate into a form easily communicable among people as happened during the great flu epidemic of 1918, which caused some 50 million fatalities.

In the experiments, mice were injected with antibodies generated from the blood of [illegible] survivors in Vietnam, where more than 40 people have succumbed to the disease since 200[illegible].

The country's first human case of H5N1 in 18 months, meanwhile, remained in an intensive care unit on Monday in Hanoi.

The mice were then exposed to the same strains that proved so deadly in humans. The treatment provided virtually complete protection, according to the study, published in the open access journal PLoS Medicine.

As important, said Lanzavecchia, was the efficacy of the antibodies in neutralizing the virus in mice that had been infected as much as 72 hours earlier.

The antibodies significantly reduced the amount of virus found in the lungs—by a factor of 10 to 100—and almost completely stopped it from reaching the brain or the spleen.

By contrast, none of the untreated mice in a control group survived.

The development of a vaccine against a possible global H5N1 pandemic has been a major focus of scientists in the field, many of whom are gathering at the end of this week in Paris for the second International Conference on Avian Influenza in Humans.

But relatively little attention has been devoted to antibodies, which act differently, Lanzavecchia said.

A vaccine induces a long-term or permanent immune response, but typically takes weeks or months to take effect. Vaccines are also useless to a patient once the disease has struck. *AFP*

WORLDBRIEFS

16 militants' recruiters nabbed

MADRID, SPAIN—The police on Monday arrested 16 men, most of them Moroccans, suspected of recruiting volunteers to fight in Iraq and other countries and spreading propaganda calling for Islamic jihad. Most of the men were arrested in the northeastern region of Catalonia, which has a large concentration of immigrants from Morocco and elsewhere. Thirteen of the arrests were made in predawn raids in Barcelona, the regional capital, and other Catalonian cities and towns. Two suspects were arrested in the town of Aranjuez, in central Spain south of Madrid, and one in the southern port of Malaga, the Interior Ministry said. Two of the men were Algerian and the rest Moroccan. *New York Times News Service*

Truck bomb kills 18 in Baghdad

BAGHDAD—A truck bomb exploded outside one of Baghdad's most revered Sunni shrines on Monday, killing at least 18 people and damaging the old outer walls on a day in which at least 30 people were killed in Iraq. "I came into the street after the explosion near the mosque, and I found five charred bodies myself, including a pregnant woman," said witness Saed Mohammed, as fire engines arrived to battle the flames. Security sources said 18 people were killed and another 28 wounded in the blast in the Sinak district, revising downwards an earlier toll. More than 20 vehicles caught fire up and down the street and the Qadiriya shrine itself was damaged, with the base of a minaret partly destroyed. Several nearby houses collapsed. *AFP*

SAS cabin crew ends strike

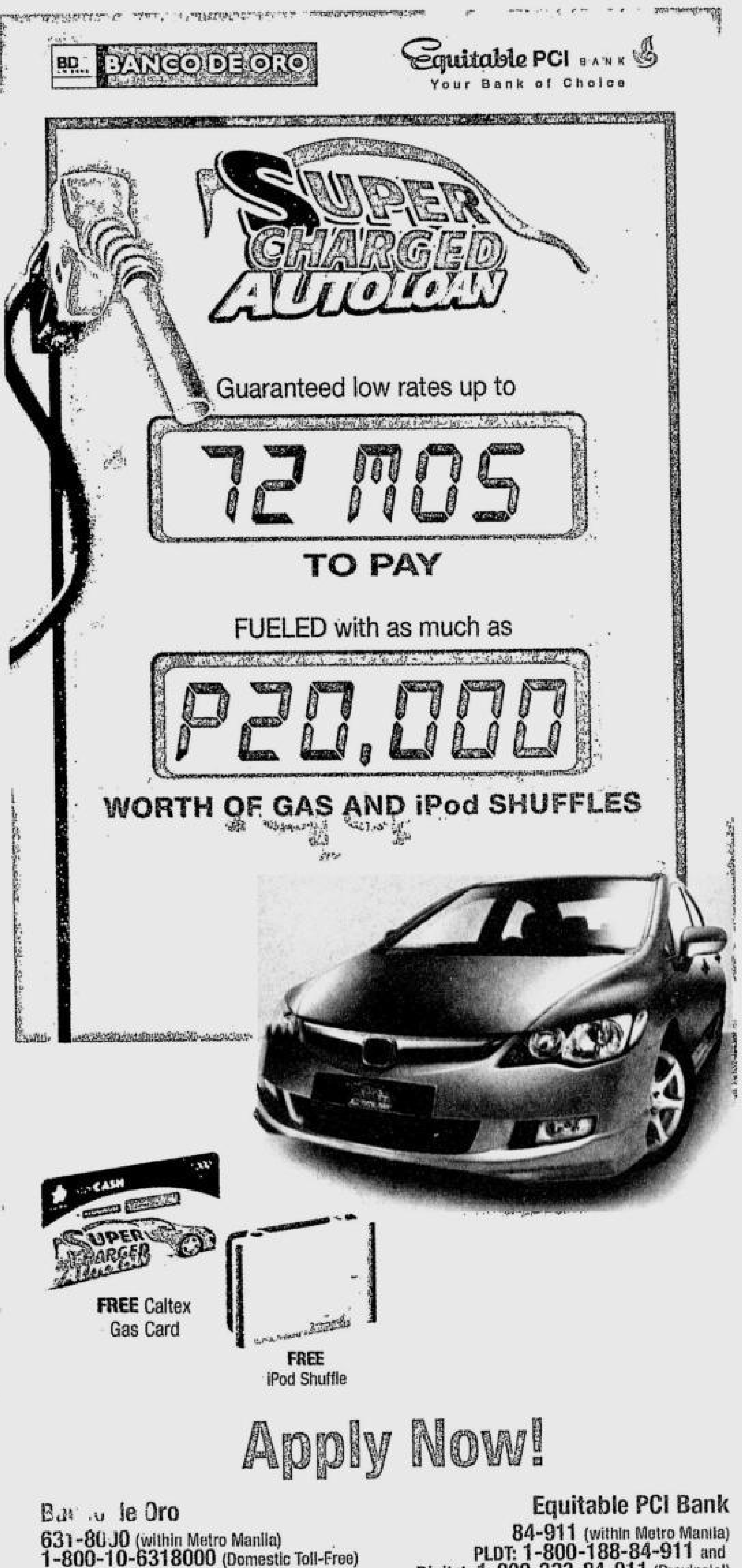
STOCKHOLM—Nordic airline Scandinavian Airlines System said flight schedules should return to normal on Tuesday after it struck a deal to end a strike which has disrupted its Swedish operations for four days. Some 1,200 flights had been canceled and 90,000 passengers affected by the strike among cabin crew over wages and working conditions. "The strike is finished," SAS Sweden said in a statement early Tuesday after talks with union leaders. It said a new employment agreement had been struck including a pay rise of 10.3 percent over three years. Some 800 crew members walked off the job on Friday after negotiators failed to reach an agreement over terms and conditions linked to SAS's offer of a 10.2 percent pay rise. *AFP*

Strong quake hits Indonesia

JAKARTA—A strong 6.1-magnitude quake struck off northeast Indonesia on Tuesday but there were no immediate reports of casualties or damage, the Meteorology and Geophysics Agency here said. The undersea quake struck at 6:36 p.m. just 40 km southeast of Labuha town on Bacan island in North Maluku province. "The earthquake carried no tsunami potential," the agency said in a statement. Its epicenter was 33 km under the seafloor, the agency said. The US Geological Survey measured the quake at 6.0 while the Hong Kong Observatory said it was 6.1. *AFP*

3 foreigners kidnapped in Iraq

BAGHDAD—Gunmen wearing police uniforms abducted at least three Western lecturers and several of their foreign bodyguards from a Finance Ministry building in Baghdad on Tuesday, a witness told Reuters. Police said the lecturers were German and they were seized from their cars outside the ministry building. They had no information on the bodyguards. The witness, who did not want to be identified, said the lecturers had been giving Finance Ministry personnel a lecture on organizing electronic contracts in a ministry building in Palestine Street. She said she believed they were Americans. The gunmen had entered the lecture room shouting "Where are the foreigners, where are the foreigners?", she said. *Reuters*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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1420 Series of 2007

Japan's PM under fire over minister's suicide

MATSUOKA AP

ABE AP

TOKYO—JAPANESE PRIME Minister Shinzo Abe felt the heat on Tuesday after the suicide of a scandal-tainted minister, with media saying he bore partial responsibility amid a sharp drop in his approval rating.

Farm Minister Toshikatsu Matsuoka, a longtime Abe ally who was under fire over political donations and rigged contracts, hanged himself on Monday, sending shockwaves through the political establishment.

A grim-faced Abe and other ministers offered a one-minute prayer for Matsuoka at the beginning of a regular cabinet meeting with a white flower placed on Matsuoka's empty chair.

"It was extremely regrettable that his life was cut short with things only half done," Abe, wearing a black tie, told his ministers, asking them to stick together and keep working for the national good.

Lawmakers, ministers and business leaders paid their respects privately at a Tokyo funeral hall. His body was later driven past the parliament building on its way to the airport and his home in the southern province of Kumamoto.

Matsuoka, a career bureaucrat turned politician, had helped Abe rise through the ranks but suffered a poor public image due to his close ties with powerful lobbies.

He hanged himself in his residence hours before he was to be grilled in parliament over allegations of bid-rigging for public works.

In another suicide linked to the scandal, Shinichi Yamazaki, the former head of a public company handling forest work, apparently threw himself off his condominium on Tuesday.

Yamazaki had headed a government-affiliated company in charge of contracts for forest work. Investigators were probing whether bids were rigged to give projects to donors to Matsuoka.

Analysts said Matsuoka's suicide would be a severe blow to Abe, who, partly due to the scandal, has suffered a sharp decline in public support ahead of key elections for the upper house of parliament on July 22.

"Prime Minister Abe cannot help but take responsibility for the case," said Tetsuro Kato, professor of politics at Hitotsubashi University in Tokyo.

"His support rate is now sliding, and the suicide may accelerate the decline," Kato said. "Abe is now at a crucial stage ahead of the upper house election." A defeat in the conservative premier's first national election could lead to calls for Abe's resignation, although his party would remain in power due to a majority in the lower house.

In the latest opinion poll released on Tuesday, support for Abe's cabinet dropped to a new low of 36 percent, down eight points from the previous survey a week ago.

The Asahi Shimbun carried out the survey of 1,031 eligible voters in the two days before Matsuoka's suicide.

Japanese dailies said Abe's insistence on sticking by a scandal-tainted minister was partly responsible for his suicide, and would cost him a political price. *AFP*

British swimmer plans record swim at the North Pole

LONDON—A BRITISH ADVENTURER IS planning to highlight the effects of global warming by becoming the first person to swim at the North Pole and break his own record for the coldest swim.

Sporting just a cap, trunks and goggles, Lewis Gordon Pugh will swim 1 km in water at a temperature of minus 1.8 degrees Celsius on July 15, a dip he expects to last 21 minutes.

Such a swim would have been impossible as little as 10 years ago because the water would have been frozen, Pugh says.

"Most people have no idea that you can find patches of open sea at the North Pole in summer," said Pugh, who set the record for the coldest human swim off Antarctica at 0 degrees Celsius.

"I can't think of a better way to show that climate change is a reality than by swimming in a place that should be totally frozen over. I hope it will … put pressure on the leaders of the G8 summit to cut carbon emissions dramatically," he said in a statement.

Climate change is expected to be high on the agenda at a meeting of the Group of Eight leading industrial countries in Germany next month.

Last year Pugh broke his own world record for the longest ice water swim by covering 1.2 km in a fjord in the Norwegian mountains, staying in the water for 23 minutes 50 seconds.

Any normal person would hyperventilate, suffer extreme shock and drown within minutes of jumping into near freezing water, but Pugh—nicknamed the Polar Bear because of his ability to withstand freezing temperatures—is made of sterner stuff.

In preparation for his swim, Pugh, 37, has increased his body weight from 87 kg to 105 kg by eating six meals a day, and has trained by swimming in a specially designed ice pool.

"This is the coldest water any human being will have swum in and Lewis has been extraordinarily dedicated," Professor Tim Noakes of the University of Cape Town, an expert on the effect of cold water on the human body, said in the statement. *Reuters*

Britain asks Russia to extradite suspect in ex-KGB spy poisoning

LUGOVOI AP

MOSCOW—BRITAIN ON MONDAY made an official request to Russia to extradite the man suspected of killing ex-KGB agent Alexander Litvinenko with radioactive polonium-210, deepening a rift between the former Cold War foes.

British prosecutors said last week they wanted to bring Russian businessman Andrei Lugovoy before a British court to try him for the murder of Litvinenko, who died on Nov. 23 after being poisoned with the rare radioactive isotope.

"I, this morning delivered the extradition papers to the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the extradition of Mr. Lugovoy," British Ambassador Anthony Brenton told reporters.

"We look for an early and positive response from the Russian authorities to the extradition request." Asked if they had received the documents, an official with the Russian prosecutor general's office said: "We confirm this." Lugovoy, who has always protested his innocence, met Litvinenko in a London hotel on Nov. 1, the day Litvinenko fell ill.

The murder of Litvinenko with a highly unstable radioactive isotope in London aroused memories of Cold War espionage and has threatened to derail relations between Britain and Russia, now tied by billions of dollars of trade.

Moscow has refused to hand over Lugovoy to Britain because Article 61 of the Russian constitution forbids the extradition of its citizens.

British officials argue that extradition arrangements exist with Russia since it signed up to the 1957 European Convention on Extradition in 2001.

Attorney General Lord Peter Goldsmith said last week that Lugovoy must face trial in Britain as Litvinenko was a British citizen and the poisoning took place on British soil.

"This is a very serious case: a murder has been committed in the United Kingdom. A lot of other people were endangered in the course of that murder," Brenton said.

A former Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) officer who obtained British citizenship, Litvinenko said in a message read out after his death that the Kremlin was behind his poisoning.

The Kremlin has said those accusations are nonsense and senior officials say the Litvinenko affair has been used by President Vladimir Putin's enemies to damage Russia's image.

Russian prosecutors opened their own investigation into Litvinenko's death and what they said was the attempted murder of Dmitry Kovtun, who along with Lugovoy met Litvinenko at the Millennium Hotel in Grosvenor Square on Nov. 1.

Russia also sent detectives to London to interview Russian tycoon Boris Berezovsky and Chechen rebel Ahmed Zakayev, both friends of Litvinenko and both enemies of the Kremlin.

Lugovoy, who used to work for the KGB's ninth directorate which protected the Soviet elite, later worked as head of security for Berezovsky. He now runs a business in Russia. *Reuters*

WHAT'S INSIDE

Venus sneaks into second round /A30

SPORTS

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Ginobili powers Spurs past Jazz /A30

Super Sealers nail semis berth

SMC - RP NATIONAL TEAM
CHAMPIO

ON TO TOKUSHIMA: Members and officials of the San Miguel-RP team, led by coach Chot Reyes (holding trophy with Nino Canaleta) and PBA commissioner Noli Eala (fourth from right, standing) celebrate their Seaba championship.

Burger King, Toyota in KO match

By Jasmine W. Payo

NOT EVEN AN INJURED FIL-AM SENSATION could hamper Henkel Sista's semifinal bid in the PBL Unity Cup.

The Super Sealers survived the absence of star point guard Ryan Reyes to post a 70-59 victory over San Miguel-Magnolia in their quarterfinal match yesterday at the Olivarez College Sports Center.

Earlier, Burger King extended its own quarterfinal series with a 73-68 triumph over Toyota Balintawak.

Fritz Bauzon drilled in all his 14 points in the last seven minutes, outscoring the entire Magnolia squad in the final canto.

"The difference was Bauzon," said coach Caloy Garcia. "We put a lot in practice and showed we're not a so-so team."

Eder Saldua helped soften up the Beverage

SUPER/ A29

GAME TOMORROW
(Olivarez College Sports Center)
3 p.m.—Toyota Balintawak vs Burger King

Villanueva switches places with Adducul

VILLANUEVA

By Francis Ochoa

BANGKOK—ENRICO VILLANUEVA HAS SAID his farewells. Now, it's time for business.

The former Red Bull star begins the second phase of his career when he practices with new team San Miguel Beer this morning and joins the Beermen as they take on the Air21 Express in the Talk 'N Text-PBA Fiesta Cup *(See related story on A28)*.

The bull-strong 6-foot-5 center has said his farewell to his teammates, and also had a short conversation with Red Bull coach Yeng Guiao

VILLANUEVA/ A28

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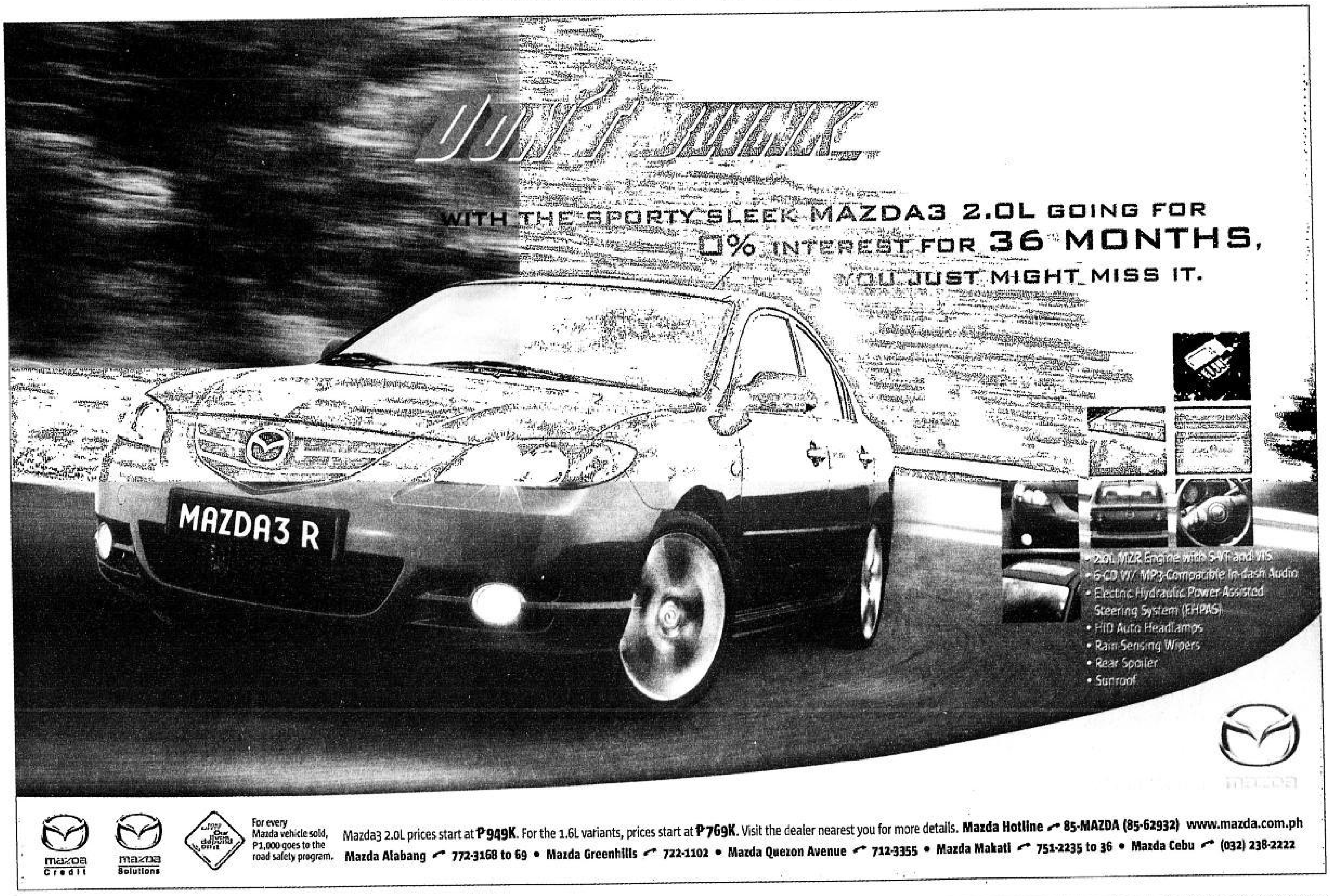

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THE BULLS have learned to turn to role players like Cyrus Baguio (above) in their crucial matches. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Bulls unruffled by Rico's exit, Coke import's debut

RED BULL COACH YENG GUIAO won't ring the alarm bell just because Coca-Cola has hired a highly regarded import on the eve of their final match in the Talk 'N Text-PBA Fiesta Conference classification round.

And neither has the transfer of one of Red Bull's key players—Enrico Villanueva—shaken Guiao's belief that his Barakos can bring the Tigers down in their 4:35 p.m. encounter today at the Araneta Coliseum.

The Tigers handed the pink slip to Jeff Varem and signed up Rashad Bell, a noted post-up player from Boston University who had had stints with Finland and Hungary in the Euroleague.

Listed at 6-foot-8 and 212 pounds, Bell was measured at 6-5 ¾ yesterday at the PBA office to become Coca-Cola's third import of the conference after Anthony Johnson and Varem.

"No matter how good he (Bell) is, when you play you're first game, it's either you play a good game or you fare badly because of the adjustment period," said Guiao.

The Bulls are seeking to stretch their run to four games and nail the first outright semifinal spot at the expense of the Tigers. Another victory at the end of the classification phase will give the Barakos the magic number—13 wins—that guarantees a semifinal slot.

A defeat tonight, however, could put the Bulls in a possible three- or four-way tie before the playoffs, something that Guiao doesn't want to happen.

The Bulls have a lower quotient compared to Barangay Ginebra, Talk 'N Text and Alaska.

The Red Bull-San Miguel Beer trade was completed over the weekend, sending Villanueva to the Beermen in exchange for Romel Adducul.

Guiao, however, doesn't want to rush Adducul into learning the Red Bull system. "I don't think he's (Adducul) ready for tomorrow (today)," Guiao said. "He still has to adjust to our brand of play."

June Navarro

STANDINGS	W	L
Red Bull	12	5
Alaska	11	6
Talk 'N Text	11	6
Ginebra	11	6
Air21	9	7
SM Beer	9	7
Coca-Cola	7	10
Sta. Lucia	5	12
Purefoods	5	12
Welcoat	4	13

GAMES TODAY
(Araneta Coliseum)
4:35 p.m.—Red Bull vs Coca-Cola
7:20 p.m.—San Miguel Beer vs Air21

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17	CIPRIAÑO ZARATAR	CA	14.7760	T-3508	Tuaca, Basud, C. Norte
18	ERLINDA LOPEZ	CA	9.3150	T-11243	Binatagan, Basud, C. Norte
19	CLERNING M. TALAGA	CA	10.6537	T-165487	Plaridel, Sta. Elena, C. Norte
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21	FELICITAS MAIGUE	CA	3.7889	P-1503	Excibah, Labo, C. Norte
22	CENA OLILA	CA	16.7732	T-21427	Binawangan, Capalonga, C. Norte
23	CENA OLILA	CA	3.9279	T-21248	Del Pilar, Capalonga, C. Norte
24	CARLOS A. FERMO	CA	8.5131	T-8877	Mactang, Capalonga, C. Norte
25	AMBROSIO BANAL	CA	18.3462	P-805	San Roque, Capalonga, C. Norte
26	ANDRES ALVARO	CA	11.7194	P-3886	Magsaysay, Capalonga, C. Norte
27	SIMEON PEÑALOSA, jr./FERNANDO ROLDAN	CA	3.1404	T-4095	Banocboc, Vinzons, C. Norte
28	SIMEON PEÑALOSA, jr./FERNANDO ROLDAN	CA	3.0049	T-3694	Calaguas 1st., Vinzons, C. Norte
29	SIMEON PEÑALOSA, jr./FERNANDO ROLDAN	CA	7.1173	T-6029	Calaguas 1st., Vinzons, C. Norte
30	UND INT OF ELVIRA SABAS ZENAROSA & VICTOR TRINO ZENAROSA	CA	43.9608	T-14758	Aguit-it, Vinzons, C. Norte
31	EDUARDO T. MENDOZA	CA	4.0443	T-88928	Tabugon, Sta. Elena, Cams. Norte
32	EDUARDO T. MENDOZA	CA	6.0995	T-66689	Tabugon, Sta. Elena, Cams. Norte
33	ANGEL PENTEÑO	CA	9.7232	T-17237	Cabuluan, Sta. Elena, Cams. Norte
34	EDUARDO T. MENDOZA	CA	3.4235	T-88927	Cabuluan, Sta. Elena, Cams. Norte
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39	PEDRO LIGAYO	CA	16.3830	T-4218	Bent, Labo, Cams. Norte
40	MARIA MOJAL YU	CA	5.6671	T-3069	San Jose, Jose, Panganiban, C. Norte
41	MARIA MOJAL YU	CA	22.7889	P-856	Luklukan Sur, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
42	MARIA MOJAL YU	CA	23.0125	T-3380	Luklukan Sur, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
43	CESAR ECHANO	CA	22.1626	T-3279	Luklukan Sur, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
44	UND INT OF ROSALINA VIRATA, ET AL	CA	26.0000	T-5064	Nakalaya, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
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48	ROY PADILLA	CA	5.8483	T-14078	Sta. Cruz, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
49	ROY PADILLA	CA	6.5691	T-16532	Sta. Cruz, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
50	ROY PADILLA	CA	12.8321	T-13192	San Jose, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
51	ROY PADILLA	CA	1.8381	T-13193	San Jose, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
52	DOMINGO GITOMO	CA	15.0062	P-5279	San Jose, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
53	RAMON GONZALES	CA	22.7069	P-2788	San Jose, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
54	PAULINO AGAM	CA	11.9734	P-2856	San Jose, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
55	EMILIO CEA	CA	3.7637	P-4123	Tamisan, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
56	ROMULO CEA	CA	6.0772	P-4125	Sta. Cruz, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
57	EDMUNDO CEA	CA	17.8124	P-4124	Sta. Cruz, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
58	RUTH CEA	CA	16.8167	P-7441	Sta. Cruz, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
59	ALFREDO ALANO	CA	21.5437	T-17841	Luklukan, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
60	LEOPOLDO LAPUZ	CA	23.2734	P-15461	San Rafael, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
61	PEDRO LAMADRID	CA	13.2838	P-2590	Sta. Rosa, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
62	CONRADO VILLALUNA	CA	18.7355	P-2338	San Pedro, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
63	ARTEMIO TANCHOCO	CA	11.3973	T-21581	San Pedro, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
64	RICARDO CRISOSTOMO	CA	11.6233	P-3976	Dahican, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
65	PEDRO ASIS	CA	9.9856	P-2091	San Pedro, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
66	GEORGE ADEA	CA	10.4061	T-12391	San Rafael, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
67	RUFINO ARAGON	CA	10.7656	P-2233	San Rafael, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
68	PASTORA AUSTRIA	CA	9.079	T-2808	San Jose, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
69	JOSE AVELLANO	CA	12.6055	T-21099	San Jose, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
70	ANGELA ACULA	CA	23.4144	P-3795	San Rafael, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
71	ROSELLA BLANAS	CA	8.0278	T-14781	Sta. Rosa, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
72	PACIANO BAYANI	CA	10.8747	P-3299	Tamisan, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
73	NICOLAS CLACIO	CA	13.5928	P-3690	San Pedro, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
74	CASIANO COLOQUIT	CA	9.6219	P-6975	San Pedro, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
75	CONCEPCION CORALDO	CA	10.3057	P-10302	Tamisan, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
76	FRANCISCA DASCO	CA	9.1833	P-2638	San Rafael, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
77	CORNELIO DEMAGANTE	CA	14.8906	P-2223	San Isidro, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
78	PACIFICO DOMA	CA	12.4033	P-3702	San Martin, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
79	RICARDO ESCALDERON	CA	17.7786	T-18219	Tamisan, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
80	PEDRO IRANG	CA	12.1778	P-303	San Jose, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
81	BALDOMERO HIRANG	CA	12.524	P-4083	San Isidro, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
82	JOSE DE LUNA	CA	22.8799	P-545	San Rafael, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
83	ELIGIO MEDENILLA	CA	9.0771	P-2610	San Isidro, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
84	SEGUNDO MANIGOTE	CA	11.3353	P-2880	San Jose, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
85	PERFECTO OGAD	CA	23.9404	P-511	San Isidro, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
86	CAROLINA RAÑADA	CA	8.8152	P-14059	Sta. Rosa, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
87	SILVESTRE RAYNERA	CA	10.3688	P-3222	Tamisan, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
88	RARO REALTY DEVELOPMENT CORP.	CA	17.0288	T-4745	Dogongan, Daet, Cams. Norte
89	RARO REALTY DEVELOPMENT CORP.	CA	3.2144	O-430	Alawihao, Daet, Cams. Norte
90	MICHAEL O. OLIVAN	CA	3.0669	T-17042	Mal-Basud, Labo, Cams. Norte
91	MICHAEL O. OLIVAN	CA	4.8745	T-17843	Mal-Basud, Labo, Cams. Norte
92	MELVIN O. OLIVAN	CA	13.0164	T-17044	Mal-Basud, Labo, Cams. Norte
93	ANGEL PENTEÑO	CA	5.7914	P-7133	Cabuluan, Sta. Elena, Cams. Norte
94	TEODORA ILAGAN	CA	7.1834	T-138252	Don Tomas, Sta. Elena, Cams. Norte
95	TEODORA ILAGAN	CA	6.2126	T-138255	Don Tomas, Sta. Elena, Cams. Norte
96	SPS. RUFINO ALCALA & LEONIDA BANAAG	CA	9.7141	T-64340	San Pedro, Sta. Elena, Cams. Norte
97	SPS. RUFINO ALCALA & LEONIDA BANAAG	CA	9.5775	T-77653	San Pedro, Sta. Elena, Cams. Norte
98	LEE SIO CHU GAO	CA	11.5385	T-16095	Villa San Isidro, Sta. Elena, Cams. Norte
99	MARCOS PIMENTEL	CA	12.1241	T-231	Calabasa, Labo, Cams. Norte
		Total	1,080.3444		

are now covered under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program. Under DAR Administrative Order No. 1. Series of 2003, the right to choose the area to be retained must be exercised within Thirty (30) days from the date of Publication of the Notice of Coverage. Failure to exercise this right of retention, protest and application for exemption within the prescribed period shall be considered as a waiver of the right/privilege to: apply for exemption/ exclusion or retention, nominate children as beneficiaries or submit evidence for determining just compensation.

Under Executive Order No. 405, we shall request the Land Bank of the Philippines to determine the reasonable Land Value of the said property being acquired pursuant to Section 17, of Republic Act No. 6657.

May 4, 2007
Date

(Sgd.) Atty. MIGUEL S. GRACILLA
OIC-PARO II

(PDI-May 30, 2007)

Villanueva switches places . . .

From page A27

just before the RP squad boarded the plane that would take them back to Manila.

"I just said thanks and goodbye, basically," said Villanueva.

The one-time Player of the Conference was a vital cog of the RP-San Miguel squad that won the Seaba Men's Championship in Ratchaburi, 80 kilometers west of the Thai capital.

Although he had hinted for two nights about the trade, he only learned it was official on Monday.

"It was still a surprise," said Villanueva. "After all, this should have been my fourth year with Red Bull."

Villanueva was dealt to the Beermen in exchange for Romel Adducul in a trade that used an exit clause in the recently minted restricted list.

Villanueva was delisted from Red Bull's restricted list, allowing the Bulls to trade him for anybody outside of San Miguel Beer's restricted list.

Had it not been for the delisting, he could have been dealt to the Beermen only in exchange for Danny Seigle.

"We do not want a team to be hostaged by the rule, that's why there was an escape clause," said PBA commissioner Noli Eala.

"As long as a team can justify the delisting, the league will approve it."

Red Bull cited insubordination and the inability of both parties to work together as grounds for the delisting.

Mick Pennisi was placed in Red Bull's restricted list in lieu of Villanueva.

At San Miguel Beer, Villanueva joins former Ateneo teammate LA Tenorio and Danny Ildefonso, with whom he feuded during the Red Bull-San Miguel semifinals of the Philippine Cup.

"I've already talked with Danny even before the trade and we're OK," Villanueva said. "We even laugh about it nowadays."

'Rico no longer happy playing for Red Bull'

NOT WANTING TO TAINT WITH ANImosity its parting with one of the team's mainstays, the Red Bull management yesterday thanked Enrico Villanueva for contributing to the Bull's resurgence.

"We are happy with the performance of Villanueva since we drafted him in 2003," said Tony Chua, Red Bull's governor and vice chair of the PBA.

"But as in the case of our other marquee players who have moved to other teams, Red Bull has approved the request for Villanueva's trade after management learned that he is no longer happy playing with us. He is a big loss to Red Bull."

Chua wished Villanueva the best of luck as the cager moves on to San Miguel Beer, "but we also assure our loyal fans that Red Bull will remain the same fierce, competitive team it has always been."

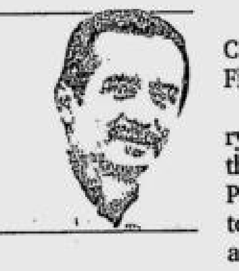
Red Bull, he said, has managed to become one of the PBA's top teams despite losing, through trades, players like Kerby Raymundo, Willie Miller, Lordy Tugade and now Villanueva.

Coach Yeng Guiao acknowledged Villanueva's big role in the team.

Inquirer Sports Staff

Farewell to a genuine scribe, a loyal friend

BARE EYE



Recah Trinidad

IT'S A PITY THAT MANNY PACQUIAO never got to know this guy, who could have helped and made a world of difference in the career of our boxing super hero.

Larry Galvez passed away over the weekend and was cremated yesterday.

He succumbed to diabetes complications. He was only 61.

Had their paths crossed, Galvez, a sharp-nosed sports editor, would've saved Pacquiao from unnecessary trouble, both in the boxing and political rings.

How? Simple. Galvez would've knocked some practical sense into Pacquiao by teaching the Pacman not to always take himself too seriously.

* * *

That could sound vague, even absurd, to both fans and experts.

But Galvez performed tasks to near perfection—with no fanfare whatsoever.

This is known to only very few, but Galvez was a silent partner in the establishment of the Crispa Redmanizer basketball empire.

No, he never plotted a single play; that job was left exclusively to the venerable coach Virgilio "Baby" Dalupan.

But it's easy to say that Larry did the dirty job in helping pamper and prime up the fabulous Redmanizers.

As a loyal and trusted aide of super sportsman Danny Floro, Galvez quietly knitted the Redmanizers behind the scene, in both gloomy and glorious times.

* * *

Of course, he never jumped in for the riotous photo op after Crispa completed the historic first PBA Grand Slam in 1976.

He just stood there in the sidelines, smiling, making sure everything was still in place at the height of the victory stampede inside the Big Dome.

By the way, that must've been a lifetime ago.

So nobody also remembered how Galvez, as sports editor of the Daily Star (forerunner of The Star), presided over an exposé on the existence of a game-fixing syndicate in RP basketball.

* * *

Although certain officials tried to shrug off that story, the anomaly would later explode, thereby resulting in severe penalties and suspensions.

From the Daily Star, Galvez edited the popular glossy magazine Sports Weekly. But he officially severed relations with the publication when he finally decided to work full-time as trouble shooter and resident worrier at Crispa.

It was a selfless stint he had at Caniogan in Pasig, where Danny Floro took him in as his own son.

Yes, all those great times with Larry Galvez, including the years he led the Sports Scribes in the National Press Club Interbeat basketball tournament, seemed to belong to another time.

* * *

After the final wake at the Paz Funeral Parlor on Araneta Ave. Monday evening, a small group of scribes with whom Larry drunk and played, repaired to a watering hole on Timog.

Soon Lito, Ding, Clyde and Gerry were asking themselves the last time they were with Galvez, a sports editor at the Varsitarian and a campus heartthrob at the University of Santo Tomas in his Warren Beaty college days.

Anyway, when it was time to say goodbye on the final wake Monday, Reggie, Larry's lovely wife, said our dear friend had an important message.

"He asked me to tell you: Take good care of yourselves," she whispered.

Earlier, it would be bared how Larry intimidated that he did not mind going ahead early because he had already been summoned by his Creator—"*Kinalabit na ko ng Poong Diyos.*"

A man of the world with a lively, free-wheeling prose, Larry Galvez knew all too well how he, an ever loyal friend, also owed his God a death.

He was trying to teach us, until the last minute, the rare ability to laugh at ourselves.

Sports execs, Arroyo tackle Olympic campaign

By Marc Anthony Reyes

FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE UNDERgoing a heart procedure, Mike Arroyo, husband of President Macapagal-Arroyo, will sit down with top sports officials today to discuss the country's delayed Olympic training program.

Philippine Sports Commission chair Butch Ramirez and Philippine Olympic Committee first vice president Monico Puentevella said the meeting will be held at 10 a.m. today in Makati.

"We are very positive of the outcome of the meeting," said Ramirez, who projected the Olympic training program to cost P250 million.

The meeting, according to sports officials, should breathe new life into the Olympic program which hit a snag after the trip of 24 national athletes got postponed several times.

Arroyo has agreed to once again invite top corporations to a pledging session to raise funds for the Olympic program similar to what he did during the past SEA Games and Asian Games.

Kiddies chess tournament fires off today at QMC Plaza

A TOURNAMENT FOR BOYS and girls 14 years old and younger will be held today at the Quezon Memorial Circle Chess Plaza.

Registration is free. Participants will have to sign up at 10 a.m. with the plaza caretaker, Efren Arguelles.

Books on chess and other items will be awarded to the top three placers. Tournament director is Alfredo V. Chay.

RACING TIPS

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Qrt/Tri)—Kapit Bahay (6), Brazen Truth (1), Yo Tero (2), El Cid (3)

Race 2—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Arsenal (3), Matikas (9), Top Priority (10), Sister Moon (2), Macedonian (3)

Race 3—(Qrt/Tri)—Business Class (2), Inca (3), Lovely Bid (7), Hazit Coming (8)

Race 4—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Sound Value (9), Mas Que Nada (7), Iloranna! (5)

Race 5—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)— Power Negotiator (11), My Lucky One (3), Speed Kind/Speed Bullet (9), My rabonnie (10), West N Wild (4)

Race 6—(Friendly Venture (2), Apple Splash (3), Kal Jason (5), La Signorina (3)

Race 7—(Penta/Qrt/Tri—Hurry Prince (5), Celestial (6), Top Quest (4), Kalashnikov (7), Carlito's Way (2)

Race 8—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)— Parrot Moe (1), Seniority (2), One Vision (8), Ledger Card (9), Gen-Gen Spirit (6), Awesome Huddy (5)

RP five way off Olympic dream

By Francis Ochoa

RATCHBURI, THAILAND—THE SPATE of routs that the RP-San Miguel squad forged in the Southeast Asian Basketball Association Men's Championship did not create enough smoke and mirrors to blind team officials from the truth.

There's still much work to be done to land an Olympic berth.

"There's still room for improvement especially in conditioning, scouting and strengthening the team's composition of players and coaches," said PBA commissioner Noli Eala, whose league was tasked by the country's national basketball federation, the Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas, to handle the elite programs of the sport.

Already, two personnel changes are on tap. The league is set to add a strength-and-conditioning coach who will help in the training and diet of the national squad, and a new coach to bolster the RP think tank.

Team manager Robert Non said the RP team committee composed of himself, Eala, SBP chair Ricky Vargas, national coach Chot Reyes and SBP executive director Patrick Gregorio are set to meet Thursday to discuss the changes.

Among the things also to be discussed are the planned trips of the national team. Already, the calendared trip to Qatar has been scrapped in favor of the Jones Cup.

"It's only the beginning and we're not even halfway through our goal of making it to the Olympics," said Non.

Eala is not even discounting the possibility of roster changes, something Reyes had already telegraphed when he said he was seriously looking at Alaska's Willie Miller and Sta. Lucia's Kelly Williams.

"We can see what we still need is a little more quickness, defense and consistency in our shooting," said Eala. "Our training should be more focused on areas of weakness."

The pricey RP squad, built out of millionaire superstars from the Philippine Basketball Association, was crafted purposely for one goal—to earn a berth in the 2008 Olympics which Beijing is hosting.

China has an automatic slot in the Games, meaning if it wins the Fiba-Asia Olympic qualifier in Tokushima, Japan, this July, the team that finishes second will also get an Olympic slot. If it doesn't bag the title, the team that does gets an Olympic berth.

SAN Miguel-RP gunner Renren Ritualo plants a kiss on the Seaba trophy as the team arrived yesterday. JESS YUSON

Super Sealers nail semifinal berth

From page A27

Masters' resistance with key baskets in the Super Sealers' 13-2 explosion in the fourth quarter.

Reyes, who keyed the Super Sealers turnaround in the elimination round, played for only a minute due to a pulled groin muscle sustained during practice.

"We played a lot better in the second half even if we lost Ryan Reyes," said Garcia. "He really wanted to play. But I told him, in case we lose today, we still have another game."

The Super Sealers will clash against defending champion Harbour Centre in a best-of-three semifinal series starting Saturday.

The winner in tomorrow's knockout battle between the Whoppers and the Road Kings will fight the top-seeded Cebuana Lhuillier-Pera Padala Moneymen in the other Final Four pairing.

JR Quiñahan got the better of his matchup with 6-foot-7 Fil-Am Joe Devance to finish with 17 points, built around a 7-of-11 shooting clip.

"Toyota played their trademark physical game," said Burger King coach Lawrence Chongson. "I told the team if we can walk away with the trash talking and the cheap shots, half the game is ours."

The scores:

First Game

BURGER KING 73—Quiñahan 17, Bravo 12, Buenafe 11, David 8, Viray 8, Urbiztondo 6, Aquino 5, Saguindel 4, Del Rosario 2, Mendoza 0, Ballesteros 0, Garrido 0.

TOYOTA BALINTAWAK 68—Cabahug 16, Devance 14, Coronel 11, Cruz 10, Rodriguez 8, Guerrero 6, Baluyot 2, Coching 1, Alcaraz 0, Cagoco 0, Daa 0, Jaime 0, Fajardo 0.

Quarters: 18-22, 36-42, 56-57, 73-68

Second Game

HENKEL SISTA 70—Bauzon 14, Javier 11, Bonus 11, Malabanan 8, Saldua 7, Misa 6, Villamin 5, Eman 2, Matias 2, Alfad 2, Yambao 1, Reyes 0.

SMC-MAGNOLIA 59—Villanueva 14, Custodio 13, Jones 9, Chan 7, Rañeses 4, Barcellano 4, Espiritu 4, Evangelista 2, Doruelo 2, Benitez 0, Magpayo 0, Bombeo 0.

Quarters: 18-15, 30-30, 46-52, 70-59

Republic of the Philippines
CEBU PORT AUTHORITY
CIP Complex, Serging Osmeña Boulevard, North Reclamation Area, 6000 Cebu City
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Fax No. +63 32 2316848
URL www.cpa.gov.ph
E-mail . cpa@cpa.gov.ph

AN INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Cebu Port Authority (CPA), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites all interested bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for the Supply of **6-Units "RECON" Shuttle Buses, 1-Unit "RECON" City-Bus, 1-Unit "RECON" Service Bus and 2-Units "Brand-new" AUVs.**

The Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) is:

6-Units "RECON" Shuttle Buses		
Unit Price	P	1,850,000.00
Total	P	11,100,000.00
1-Unit "RECON" City-Bus		
Unit Price	P	1,750,000.00
1-Unit "RECON" Service Bus		
Unit Price	P	1,780,000.00
2-Units "Brand-new" AUVs		
Unit Price	P	879,000.00
Total	P	1,758,000.00

Bidding Documents may be purchased from the BAC Secretariat upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of **FIVE THOUSAND PESOS (P 5,000.00)** starting **31 May - 6 June 2007.**

Pre-Bid Conference shall be held on 13 June 2007, 2 pm at the CPA Conference Room

Bids and eligibility requirements must be submitted to the BAC Secretariat on or before 9 am on 25 June 2007 at the CPA Conference Room, 2nd Floor, CIP Complex, North Reclamation Area, Cebu City. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security. **(Late bids shall not be accepted).**

The Cebu Port Authority (CPA) reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process, or to reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

(Sgd.) **MARIO G. TAN**
BAC Chairman

Noted by:

(Sgd.) **ANGELO C. VERDAN**
General Manager

(PDI--May 30, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
DR. JOSE FABELLA MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
Manila

INVITATION TO RE-BID

The Dr. Jose Fabella Memorial Hospital invites interested bidders for the re-bid of the following equipment:

			ABC
1.	Sterilizer, autoclave	1 unit	P 650,000.00/unit
2.	Oxygen Manifold	2 units	785,000.00/unit
3.	Copy Printer	1 unit	259,000.00/unit
4.	Supply/Installation of 3 sets of 250mm2 THW feeder lines for Cummins Generator Set (transfer of the existing feeder lines for Generator Set)	1 lot	1,300,000.00/lot

Bid documents may be secured at the BAC Secretariat, Administrative Office For details, please contact telephone no. 735-7144.

All particulars relative to eligibility, bid security, performance, pre-bid, opening of bids, evaluation, post-qualification and award shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of RA 9184 and its implementing rules and regulations.

Schedule of Activities:

	Date	Venue/Time
Pre-bid Conference	June 7, 2007	Reception Hall, 10:00 AM
Bid Opening	June 19, 2007	OB Conference Rm, 8:30 AM

The DJFMH reserves the right to reject any or all bids to waive any formality found therein and to accept such bids as may be considered advantageous to the government.

The DJFMH-BAC assumes no obligation to compensate or indemnify the bidders for any expenses or losses that may be incurred in the preparation of bids nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) **ELISEA S. MARQUEZ, M.D., D.P.B.A.**
Chairperson, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - May 30, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office applications for Alien Employment Permit/s

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
BARBER-SMITH BELL MANNING, INC. 3/F BDO Plaza, 8737 Paseo de Roxas, Makati City	Jari Martin Kristensen	Director
PORTRADE PHILIPPINES, INC. 28/F Tower 2, The Enterprise Center, Ayala Ave., Makati City	Henry Chin Lung Tiong	Analyst
PORTRADE PHILIPPINES, INC. 28/F Tower 2, The Enterprise Center, Ayala Ave., Makati City	Boon Hua Chua	President
MARINA SQUARE PROPERTIES INC. 1588 M.H. del Pilar St., Malate, Manila	Shui Keung Li	Financial Controller & Assistant Treasurer
SHINE GIRLS HAIR SALON CORP. 504 Guerrero Don Rafael Bldg., Guerrero St. cor. Makati Ave., Makati City	Jaesung Kim	Professional Consultant
FUJITSU TEN SOLUTIONS PHILIPPINES, INC. 8/F East Tower, PSE Ctr., Exchange Rd., Ortigas Complex, Pasig City	Makoto Hashimoto	Manager for Information System Department
GAMINGWEB, INC. 17/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Ke Feng Loh	Mandarin/Cantonese Speaking-Junior Executive (Operations)-Unit 2
GAMINGWEB, INC. 17/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Seng Jye Neng	Mandarin/Cantonese Speaking-Junior Executive (Operations)-Unit 2
GAMINGWEB, INC. 17/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Jaan Horng Lee	Mandarin/Cantonese Speaking-Operations Officer-Unit 2
GAMINGWEB, INC. 17/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Jiow Chin Chong	Mandarin/Cantonese Speaking - R & D Officer-Unit 2
GAMINGWEB, INC. 17/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Kah Yung Kong	Mandarin/Cantonese Speaking - R & D Officer-Unit 2
GAMINGWEB, INC. 17/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Chee Keen Low	Mandarin/Cantonese Speaking - Senior Executive (Operations) - Unit 2
GAMINGWEB, INC. 17/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Chee Yuan Toh	Mandarin/Cantonese Speaking - Assistant Operations Manager
GAMINGWEB, INC. 17/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Nyong Kwong Chong	Mandarin/Cantonese Speaking - Assistant R & D Manager
GAMINGWEB, INC. 17/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Yih Farn Chia	Mandarin/Cantonese Speaking - Deputy Manager
GAMINGWEB, INC. 17/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Khai Hoe Soong	Mandarin/Cantonese Speaking - R & D Officer - Unit 2
GAMINGWEB, INC. 17/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Bin Daud Abdullah	Bi-lingual Speaking Regional Administrative Manager
GAMINGWEB, INC. 17/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Kok Heng Tan	Mandarin/Cantonese Speaking - Senior Executive (Operations) - Unit 2
GAMINGWEB, INC. 17/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Francis Meng Lee Lau	Mandarin/Cantonese Speaking - Executive (Operations) - Unit 2
GAMINGWEB, INC. 17/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Cheh Chong Kuik	Mandarin Cantonese Speaking - Executive (Operations) - Unit 2
ZTE PHILIPPINES, INC. 25/F Pacific Star Bldg., Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., cor. Makati Ave. Makati City	Jingxing Shao	Technical Manager
WE ARE THE WORLD FRIEND TOUR CORP. 2/F Clinnan Court, 205 P. Burgos St., Pasay City	Jee Hoon Kang	Tour Coordinator
SHINIH PHILIPPINES INC. Delnor St., Marcos Alvarez Ave., Brgy. Talon V, Las Pinas City	Jenny Chia-Ling Chien	VP-Marketing
SYKES ASIA INC. 26/F Robinson's Summit Center, 6783 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Yun Zhou	Mandarin Client Support
INTERNATIONAL TRAINING & INNOVATION CONSULTING, INC. 10/F IBM Plaza, Eastwood City, Libis, Quezon City	Christina Gosteli	Corporate Business Trainer
JEI LANGUAGES AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER, INC. 2/F Lenjul Bldg., Blk-11 Lot 20 Commonwealth Ave., Diliman, Quezon City	Kyung Hwa Park (w/o SEO)	Operations Manager
GAMINGWEB, INC. 17/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Vui Kien Choo	Mandarin/Cantonese Speaking - R & D Officer - Unit 2
FORBEST BUILDERS INC. 107-A Tandang Sora St., Caloocan City	Shulin Jing	Consultant
ROYALTY EMPRESS LEISURE & FITNESS CENTER 1135 Soler St., Binondo, Manila	Runfang Yang	Senior Training Officer
ROYALTY EMPRESS LEISURE & FITNESS CENTER 1135 Soler St., Binondo, Manila	Jieqin Wei	Assistant Training Officer
ROYALTY EMPRESS LEISURE & FITNESS CENTER 1135 Soler St., Binondo, Manila	Lifen Chen	Training Officer
ZTE PHILIPPINES INC. 25/F Pacific Star Bldg., Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., cor. Makati Ave., Makati City	Fang Liu	HR Manager
GAMINGWEB, INC. 17/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Kon Vay Tham	Mandarin/Cantonese Speaking-Junior Executive (Operations)-Unit 2

If you have any information/objection to the above mentioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

The DOLE conducts free seminar on Labor-Human Relations and Productivity.
For more information, please call 339-2013 & 303-5920.

LOURDES M. TRASMONTE
Regional Director

(PDI - May 30, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
DR. JOSE FABELLA MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
Manila

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Dr. Jose Fabella Memorial Hospital invites interested bidders/contractors to bid for

Name of Project : Provision of -

		Estimated Qty.	Unit Cost	
1.	Laundry Services			P 2,536,730.00
	Lot I	145,000 pcs.	P5.50/pc.	
	Lot II	179,000 pcs.	9.65/pc.	
	Lot III	450 pcs.	26.40/pc	
2.	Security Services (11 guards)			198,000.00/month
3.	Janitorial Services (re-bid) (54 janitors)			830,456.28/month

Project Location : Dr. Jose Fabella Memorial Hospital
Lope de Vega St., Sta. Cruz, Manila

Bid documents may be secured at the BAC Secretariat, Administrative Office. For details, please contact telephone no. 735-7144.

All particulars relative to eligibility, bid security, performance, pre-bid, opening of bids, evaluation, post-qualification and award shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of RA 9184 and its implementing rules and regulations.

Schedule of Activities:

	Date	Venue/Time
Pre-bid Conference	Janitorial Services - June 6, 2007 Security Services - June 6, 2007 Laundry Services - June 7, 2007	OB Conf. Room, 1:30 PM OB Conf. Room, 3:30 PM Reception Room, 8:30 AM
Bid Opening	Janitorial Services - June 18, 2007 Security Services - June 18, 2007 Laundry Services - June 19, 2007	Reception Room, 8:30 AM Reception Room, 1:30 PM OB Conf. Room, 1:30 PM

The DJFMH reserves the right to reject any or all bids to waive any formality found therein and to accept such bids as may be considered advantageous to the government.

The DJFMH-BAC assumes no obligation to compensate or indemnify the bidders for any expenses or losses that may be incurred in the preparation of bids nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) **ELISEA S. MARQUEZ, M.D., D.P.B.A.**
Chairperson, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - May 30, 2007)

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
Maynila, Pilipinas
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Bangko Sentral Ng Pilipinas, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project/ Brief Description	One (1) lot - Supply, delivery, installation and configuration of eForms Development Software, including implementation services for the Electronic Communications Project per BSP's scope of work and technical specifications
Approved Budget for the Contract	P3,024,000.00
Completion Period	The project implementation, including successful conversion of at least five (5) existing BSP forms, shall be completed within ninety (90) calendar days after receipt of the Notice to Proceed, which will be secured from the Information Systems Support and Development Department (ISSDD) within three (3) working days from receipt of the approved contract.

Prospective bidders should have undertaken a similar requirement awarded and completed within the last five (5) years (Y2002 to present) amounting to at least 50% of the Approved Budget for the Contract. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	Starting 30 May 2007 (up to 1:30 p.m. only)
2. Pre-bid Conference	8 June 2007, 3:00 p.m., Room MR2A
3. Opening of Bids	26 June 2007, 2:00 p.m., Room MR2A
4. Bid Evaluation	These shall be in accordance with the prescribed periods allowed in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR)-A of R.A. No. 9184 dated 10 January 2003.
5. Post-qualification	
6. Notice of Award	

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of P1,520.00 to the BSP Cashier.

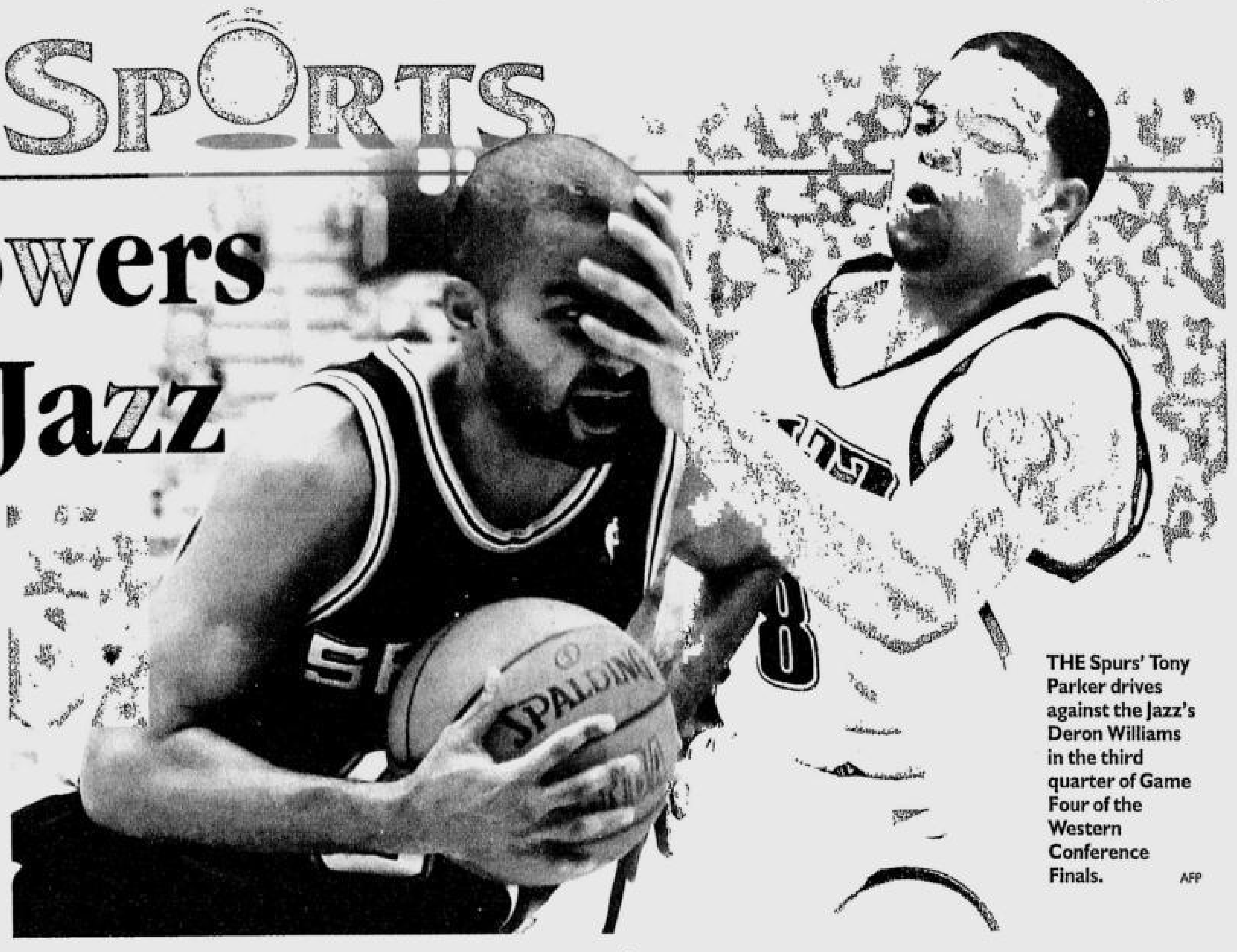
The BSP assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

The BSP reserves the right to reject any and all bid proposals, or declare the bidding a failure, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) **MELPIN A. GONZAGA**
Vice-Chairman

(PDI - May 30, 2007)

Ginobili powers Spurs past Jazz


THE Spurs' Tony Parker drives against the Jazz's Deron Williams in the third quarter of Game Four of the Western Conference Finals. AFP

SALT LAKE CITY—WITH EACH DRIVE TO THE basket and each fall to the floor—flop or not—Manu Ginobili made the Utah Jazz and their fans angrier and angrier.

Players and coaches complained to the refs. Fans booed, threw things and popped balloons.

All Ginobili did was keep hitting his free throws, pushing the San Antonio Spurs to a 91-79 victory Monday night and a 3-1 lead in the Western Conference finals.

Ginobili scored 22 points, 15 coming in the fourth quarter and 11 of those coming from the foul line. San Antonio was 19-of-25 on free throws in the final period, with four of the attempts courtesy of technical fouls.

Utah drew four technicals fouls down the stretch, leading to the ejection of coach Jerry Sloan and usually mild-mannered Derek Fisher. Jazz fans—seeing their team lose at home for the first time in eight games this postseason—showed their disgust by hurling things toward the court, appearing to hit San Antonio's Bruce Bowen with something small.

Of all the blows landed in this game, the most severe is to Utah's comeback hopes. After a 26-point win in Game 3, the Jazz felt good about their chances to pull off a historic comeback but now will have to win Game 5 in San Antonio on Wednesday night just to bring the series back to Salt Lake City. Utah has lost 18 straight games in San Antonio dating to 1999.

"I'm sure a lot of people are counting us out in the series," said Jazz forward Carlos Boozer, who had 18 points and nine rebounds. "We have a much better feel for this team after playing them four times. All we can do is toughen up... see if we can get one in San Antonio."

Tim Duncan had 19 points, nine rebounds, five blocks and five turnovers. He was 5-of-8 from the line in the fourth quarter, part of San Antonio going 19-of-25 from the stripe.

Fabricio Oberto had 11 points and 11 rebounds and Tony Parker had his worst game of the series with 17 points, two assists and three turnovers.

This ugly-but-effective performance—more free throws (30) than field goals (28)—puts the Spurs within a victory of reaching the NBA finals for the third time in five years, and the fourth time since 1999. San Antonio has won the title each time.

Utah's Deron Williams had 27 points and 10 assists in 38 minutes despite having lost eight pounds the last two days while fighting a stomach ailment. He had two IVs in the morning, then was so good through three quarters that pregame reminders of Michael Jordan overcoming illness to have a huge game against the Jazz in the 1997 NBA finals—made even by Sloan—no longer seemed silly.

But Williams didn't get enough help. Boozer was the only player to score more than nine points, and he didn't even make it to the foul line. Neither did center Mehmet Okur.

After three lopsided games, this one got tight midway through the third quarter,

Utah went into the fourth quarter down 63-62 and was within 67-66 a few minutes later. Then Ginobili hit a 3-pointer, " AP

Venus sneaks into 2nd round

PARIS—IT WAS A CASE OF BETter late than never for Venus Williams and Nikolay Davydenko when the pair made the most of a short dry spell to sneak into the second round of the French Open on Monday.

Rain pelted down over Roland Garros for the second day running and Williams capitalised on the 90-minute window to overcome rising French prospect Alize Cornet 6-4 6-3 while Davydenko demolished Italian Stefano Galvani 6-3 6-1 6-1.

Williams had expected to face Cornet on Sunday but instead twiddled her thumbs in the locker room as drizzle washed away most of the opening day's schedule.

After enduring a further three-hour delay on Monday, the American took out her frustration on her 17-year-old opponent.

Playing in front of a smattering of fans, Williams survived four games going against the serve and took the first set with a stinging crosscourt winner.

Cornet, ranked 118th in the world and without a title to her name, was not expected to pose much of a threat to the five-times grand slam champion.

Once she lost a chance to go 3-2 up with a break in the second set, her hope of pulling off an upset evaporated into the grey clouds hanging over Centre Court.

"I'm just very happy to be healthy and to have the opportunity to play," said 26th seed Williams, who missed the last two slams with wrist problems."

Davydenko wrapped up his win just in time after a stressful morning.

As rain began to beat down on the red clay, 117th ranked Galvani tossed a forehand wide to hand the Russian victory.

ROGER Federer: Rain delayed his march to second round. AFP

The Russian said he had also faced a few jittery moments in the morning when he was stuck in traffic en route to Roland Garros and would have turned up late if his match had started as scheduled at 11 a.m. local time (0900 GMT).

"I was nervous about being disqualified as I was going nowhere in the traffic."

Li Na was also dreaming about outfits but her plans to go on a shopping spree in the fashion capital of the world proved to be a little premature after she racked up a 7-6 6-0 win over Germany's Sandra Kloesel.

World number one Roger Federer had streaked ahead of American journeyman Michael Russell 6-4 4-1 when yet another deluge soaked the players as they scurried back into the locker room.

Only 14 matches have been completed over the first two days of the claycourt grand slam, giving organisers a scheduling headache for the first week of the tournament.

Reuters

AUGUST DELA CRUZ

ATENEO's Kanchana Jindarat spikes one in over Letran's Dianna Mae Diaz and Maribel Go (2).

SHAKEY'S V-LEAGUE

Lady Pirates notch win No. 4

By Romina S. Austria

LYCEUM STUCK TO ITS STARTING unit almost the entire match and the result was a 25-19, 25-17, 29-31, 25-19 beating of Far Eastern University yesterday in the Shakey's V-League women's volleyball tournament at The Arena in San Juan.

The win was the fourth consecutive for the surprising Lady Pirates who strengthened their hold of the top spot.

Sherrilyn Carillo and Beverly Boto accounted for a combined 33 points on 95 tries, with Carillo emerging as the most lethal Lyceum scorer with 19.

Aside from the duo, coach Emil Lontoc drew excellent performances from guest player Joslelyn Degorostiza, Cristina Salak, Dahlia Cruz and Jane Kathleen Jarin in dealing the Lady Tamaraws their second loss in three matches.

Jarin and Salak also converted six points from 28 blocks as Lyceum foiled 85 FEU attempts, eight more than its foe's.

In the brownout-marred second game, Ateneo dropped the first set but was deadly in the next three to turn back Letran, 24-26, 25-17, 25-15, 25-22.

Guest player Michelle Laborte stopped repeated comebacks by Letran with strong blocks while assistant coach Kanchana Jindarat, a replacement for another guest player and fellow Thai Intuan Namphon, who has a torn ACL, scored 26 points on 53 tries.

Ateneo, which upset defending UAAP champion University of Santo Tomas last week, raised its mark to a second-best 2-1, in a tie with arch rival La Salle.

La Salle could, however, seize solo second if it beats San Sebastian College in the nightcap, which was still being played at press time.

Letran is winless in three starts.

The Ateneo-Letran match was about to start when power interruption hit The Arena. After electricity was restored nearly 20 minutes later, the lights went off anew for 15 minutes with Ateneo ahead, 3-1, in the first set.

GAMES TOMORROW
(*The Arena, San Juan*)
1 p.m.—San Sebastian vs FEU
3 p.m.—Lyceum vs Adamson
5 p.m.—UST vs Letran

PCU tossers thwart RTU, Tigresses score

PHILIPPINE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY BESTed host Rizal Technological U, 25-20, 25-22, 25-21, Monday in women's play of 2007 Inter-Collegiate national volleyball championships at the RTU gym in Mandaluyong City.

The victory was the second for the PCU belles and overshadowed Santo Tomas' 25-10, 25-11, 25-19 rout of Saint Louis College that leveled its record to 1-1.

The Tigresses came into the game still smarting from a stunning loss to the Adamson Lady Falcons on opening day.

In the only other women's match, University of Cordillera matched UST's slate after rallying past University of Perpetual Help, 22-25, 25-11, 25-14, 25-20.

In the men's competition of the meet organized by the Philippine Volleyball Federation, RTU blasted PCU-Dasmariñas, 25-17, 25-21, 25-21; UST survived Letran, 15-25, 25-23, 18-25, 25-20, 15-8; Saint Jude trounced University of the Philippines, 25-14, 25-13, 25-15; and Central Colleges of the Philippines overcame Perpetual Help, 25-23, 20-25, 19-25, 25-21, 15-11.

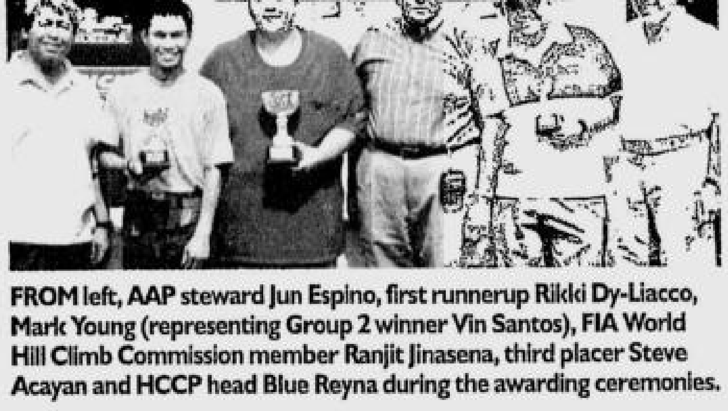
De la Merced gives rivals farewell party

JAN DE LA MERCED, DRIVING a Subaru WRX STI, gave his rivals a farewell party they won't soon forget when he set the fastest time of the day during the third and final round of the 2007 Hill Climb Series held on the road leading up to the Mount Samat National Shrine in Bataan on May 19.

Following a Mass celebrated by Fr. Dennis Venus, nearly 40 drivers queued up for the start of the 4-kilometer run up to the shrine and its gigantic cross, which was marked by twisting corners with brief stretches.

Feeling at home on the challenging course, De la Merced showed adroitness, confidence and determination, posting a time of 2 minutes 46.66 seconds, which put him beyond the reach of his rivals.

"I just focused on my driving and tried to be as smooth as possible," said De la Merced, whose effort earned him top class honors in Group 3. "I was surprised when I saw my times."


CLIMB CLUB OF THE PHILIPPINES
FROM left, AAP steward Jun Espino, first runnerup Rikki Dy-Liacco, Mark Young (representing Group 2 winner Vin Santos), FIA World Hill Climb Commission member Ranjit Jinasena, third placer Steve Acayan and HCCP head Blue Reyna during the awarding ceremonies.

Carlo Garcia, in a Mitsubishi Lancer Evo VI, submitted a 2:48.22 and finished first runner-up in the group. Despite a problem with his engine management system, Carlos Anton, driving a Honda CRX, registered a 2:52.49 to finish third.

SPORTSWATCH

Cancer Society 'golf for a cause' slated at Wack Wack

A MAMMOGRAM MOBILE THAT WILL TOUR THE COUNTRY TO AID POOR WOMEN in detecting early signs of breast cancer is the goal of the Drive for Live charity golf tournament which tees off on July 17 at Wack Wack in Mandaluyong City. The fundraiser is a joint project of the Philippine Cancer Society and the Rotary Golfing Fellowship Foundation of the Philippines, whose officials graced yesterday's PSA forum at the Pantalan Restaurant in Manila. "Breast cancer is now the No. 3 killer disease among women in the Philippines," said PCS president Roberto Paterno. "But it is curable if detected early." Executive director Mingdo Fajardo told the session sponsored by Pagcor, Manila Mayor Lito Atienza and son Arnold "Ali" that they hope to raise at least P1 million through the tournament. PCS RGFPP trustee Dennis Decena, who represented RGFFP president Jose Vito Borromeo, said they will invite about 200 top private and government executives to play in the 18-hole tournament.

Makati Invt'l derby semifinal round today

THE SEMIFINAL ROUND OF "MAKATI INVITATIONAL 8-COCK SUPER DERBY" TAKES center stage starting at 5 p.m. today at Makati Coliseum with B-Meg Derby Ace and Gran Matador as sponsors. Fifteen participants posted the two wins each in the opening round Monday: Rudy Albano, Vice Gov. Boyet Joson, Nato Lacson, Rudy Diestro, Gary, Sam Mendoza and Ricky Valencia, Bong Garcia, Zaldy Sandoval of California and Eddie Bong Plaza, F. Villanueva, Lito Orillaza, Tony Marfori, Amor Salvanera, Joey delos Santos), Edwin Yap and Osang dela Cruz. Twelve more participants from Negros Occidental and Davao will field straight four cocks.today. The final round unfolds on Friday.

GCAP Championship 6-cocker under way

SOME 70 TOPNOTCH ENCOUNTERS ARE ON THE ROSTER IN THE GENTLEMEN Cockers Association of the Philippines (GCAP) Championship 6-Cock Derby which fires off at 4 p.m. today at the San Juan Coliseum. Today's 10th and final leg, backed by Sagupaan Complexor 3000, dangles a guaranteed prize of P1.2 million. Gunning for the 2007 GCAP Cocker of the Year title are the top 10 contenders, Pol Estrellado and Totoy Haruta, Rodolfo Pineda, Tony Tan, Jack Yap, Louie Cua and Boy de Roca, Vice Gov. Boyet Joson, Patrick Antonio, Rio Salceda, Otto Balboa and Bubot Booc. Meanwhile, the SJC Cockers Club championship derby gets going on Saturday.

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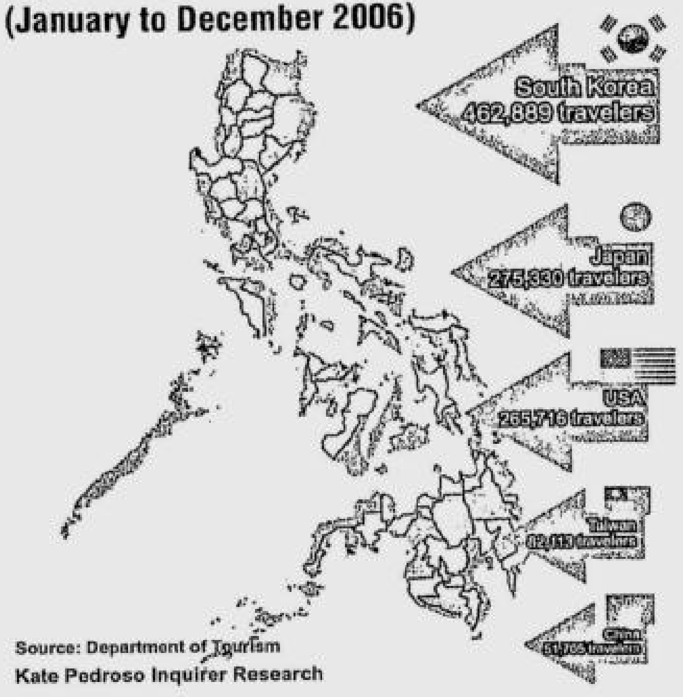
Figures that matter in our nation's life

**Top RP visitors
(January to December 2006)**



Source: Department of Tourism
Kate Pedroso Inquirer Research

Gov't to unload stake in PNB

With rehab soon over, bank to be privatized by yearend

By Doris C. Dumlao

PHILIPPINE NATIONAL BANK, CONTROLLED BY tobacco magnate Lucio Tan, will be fully privatized this year as the government plans to unload its remaining 12-percent stake in the bank.

PNB, once the country's largest bank, will likewise finish its state-assisted rehabilitation this year and pay off P6.1 billion in outstanding debt to the Philippine Deposit Insurance Co., bank president Omar Byron Mier said in a briefing yesterday.

"By the end of the year, government will not have equity or loan exposure in PNB," Mier said after the bank's stockholders meeting.

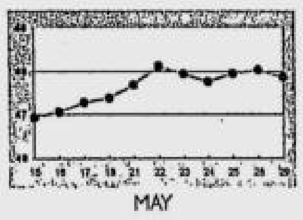
To build up capital, PNB will offer 90 million in new shares to the public this year. At the same time, the government will sell its remaining 70 million shares through a secondary shares offering.

The joint sale, equivalent to 23

GOV'T/ B2

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P 46.13 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., May 29, 2007

STOCK MARKET

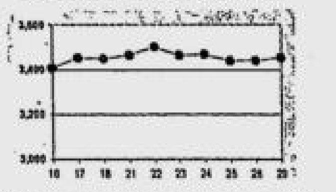
Shares close 0.26% higher

SHARE PRICES YESTERDAY CLOSED 0.26 percent higher on bargain-hunting in select blue-chips, dealers said. However, the broader market consolidated amid a dearth of strong leads, they added.

The composite index gained 9.06 points to 3,452.62 after moving be-

SHARES/ B2

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B6)

Mine group sees investments growing to $10B by 2010

By Amy R. Remo

A CHAMBER OF MINES OFFICIAL EXPECTS total capital investments in the country's mining sector to hit $10 billion by 2010—much higher than the government and private sector estimate of $6.5 billion.

According to Chamber of Mines president Benjamin Philip Romualdez, the rate of foreign investments is also expected to rise steadily to $1 billion a year over the next five years, starting 2008.

"The higher projection was mainly due to a number of investments poured into the country, which was not included in our previous computations and estimates," Romualdez explained.

He clarified, however, that the $10-billion figure is his "personal estimate."

But the government and some private groups conservatively placed the projection at around $7 billion, he added.

Among the new investors are Sumitomo Metal Mining Co. Ltd., which plans to put up a nickel-based smelting project in Mindanao worth $1 billion; Australia-based BHP Billiton, which will invest up to $1.5 billion in a nickel project; and Xstrata Copper, which committed $500 million in investments.

Romualdez said the higher projections were also partly brought on by rising production costs and expansion in the size of most projects, as more areas are being eyed for possible mining activities.

He added that China and Japan hope

MINE GROUP/ B2

IN THIS ISSUE

▨ **Lopezes preparing** bid for gov't stake in Meralco /B3

▨ **5-yr treasury** bond rate up /B6

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Gov't spent ₱300B for debt service in 1st 4 months

Amount allocated for debt payment continues to drop

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT SPENT P300.89 BILLION from January to April—representing close to 90 percent of the total revenue collected during the period—to service debts that had fallen due.

The government collected P338.5 billion in revenues, such as taxes and proceeds from privatization of state-owned assets, during the four-month period.

But finance officials said that, although debt service still accounted for bulk of the government's revenue, the amount allocated for paying maturing liabilities already marked a slight drop compared to that of last year.

The amount spent for debt service in January to April this year was 7.7 percent lower than the P326.234 billion recorded in the same period last year.

National Treasurer Omar Cruz said the decline in the amount allocated for debt service was a natural consequence of the expected drop in the government's budget deficit.

This year, the government expects its budget deficit to drop to P63 billion from P64.8 billion last year. The deficit fall is seen to result from an increase in revenue collection.

Cruz said that a lower budget deficit means lower need for borrowings and a better credit image for the country. Both the reduction in borrowings and better credit image, which results in lower interest rates on loans, would allow the government to allot less budget for debt servicing.

But for April alone, there had been a year-on-year increase in the amount spent for debt service. The government allocated P125.28 billion to pay for its debts that fell due in April, about three times higher higher than the P46.87 billion recorded in the same month last year.

Cruz said the year-on-year increase in the April debt service was due to the government's total liabilities maturing in 2007, most of which fell due in April.

But he said that for the entire year, the government's spending for debt service should go down from that of last year's.

Data from the Bureau of the Treasury showed that of the total amount spent for debt service in the first four months of the year, P191.74 billion was accounted for by principal debts, while the smaller amount of P109.119 was accounted for by interests.

If broken down in terms of source of loan, the amount spent for debt service in January to April was composed of P227.715 billion worth of domestically obtained loans and P73.145 billion worth of foreign liabilities.

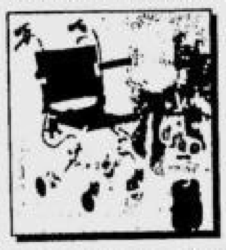
The government sources the money it uses to pay off its debts partly from the taxes collected from the public and from non-tax revenues, such as proceeds of privatization of state assets.

But since revenue collection is not enough to service all maturing debts, and cover other expenses—such as salaries of state workers, infrastructure and social services—the government continues to engage in borrowings to meet all its expenditure requirements.

Government spending for debt service accounted for bulk of its revenue, as a result of its budget deficit, which in turn was caused by poor tax collection.

The deficit forced the government to borrow just to cover all its expenditure requirements. Through the years, the government increasingly went deeper into debt because of the annual borrowings.

TRAVEL WHEELCHAIR



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Gov't to unload ...

From page B1

percent of PNB's outstanding stock, will jack up PNB's free float at the stock market from 10 percent to about 33 percent, Mier said.

The Lucio Tan group, on the other hand, will remain as the dominant stockholder with a 67-percent stake in PNB.

Of the remaining government stake in PNB, the PDIC owns about 9 percent while the national government has 3 percent.

As to PNB's immediate future, he said that the Tan group is not trying to regain its former status as the country's biggest bank in terms of assets.

Instead, he said, PNB would simply strive to break into the ranks of the country's top three banks in terms of return on equity (ROE).

Mier said the bank would likewise continue efforts to boost asset quality.

Recently, it sold P20 billion worth of bad assets to an asset management company partially owned by ING Bank.

As of end-2006, PNB has trimmed its nonperforming loans as a ratio of total loans to 10.8 percent from as high as 46 percent in 2003.

At the same time, its acquired assets had fallen to P25 billion or 10 percent of total assets as of end-2006 from 12 percent or P27 billion a year ago.

"Our business model has three main objectives: to reduce PNB's nonperforming assets ratio to within acceptable levels; to strengthen PNB's core business; and to improve the bank's profitability," Mier said.

He said 2006 was a "defining moment" for PNB, following the drastic reduction in bad assets, as well as the P5.5-billion tier 2 capital-raising effort, which increased its capital adequacy ratio to 20 percent from 17 percent in 2005.

PNB also sustained its fourth year of profitability in 2006.

Also, PNB has shored up its net income from P52 million in 2003 to P820 million in 2006.

"With this performance, PNB is in a prime position toward achieving a P1-billion annual net income for 2007," Mier said. "That will be a 10-year high for the bank."

In the first quarter, PNB posted a consolidated net income of P308.3 million—60-percent higher than that of a year ago.

Mine group ...

From page B1

to secure their supply of low-grade nickel, used in making steel, from the Philippines.

He explained that China has found a way to lower steel production costs by mixing low grade nickel with the high grade variety.

"RP has a major stockpile of low grade nickel, and nickel happens to be the 'metal of the moment,'" said Romualdez. "What oil is to Middle East, nickel is to the Philippines."

Very soon, nickel will outstrip even copper shipments, he added.

Demand for the metal has been surging in China, India and Japan, resulting in increased nickel production, Romualdez said.

Apart from steel, nickel is also used in producing various other metal alloys, cast irons, and electroplated goods.

Nickel-rich areas in the Philippines include Surigao, Zambales and Palawan.

The country is said to have about $1 trillion worth of untapped gold, copper and nickel resources.

Many big foreign firms have already either staked their claims or expressed interest in investing in the country. Among these investors are Swiss-based miner Xstrata, Anglo American, Rio Tinto and BHP Billiton.

Shares ...

From page B1

tween 3,443.56 and 3,461.77.

The broader all-share index gained 4.20 points to 2,213.30.

Gainers beat losers 66 to 41, while 59 stocks were flat. Volume totaled 5.5 billion shares worth P4.4 billion ($95.8 million).

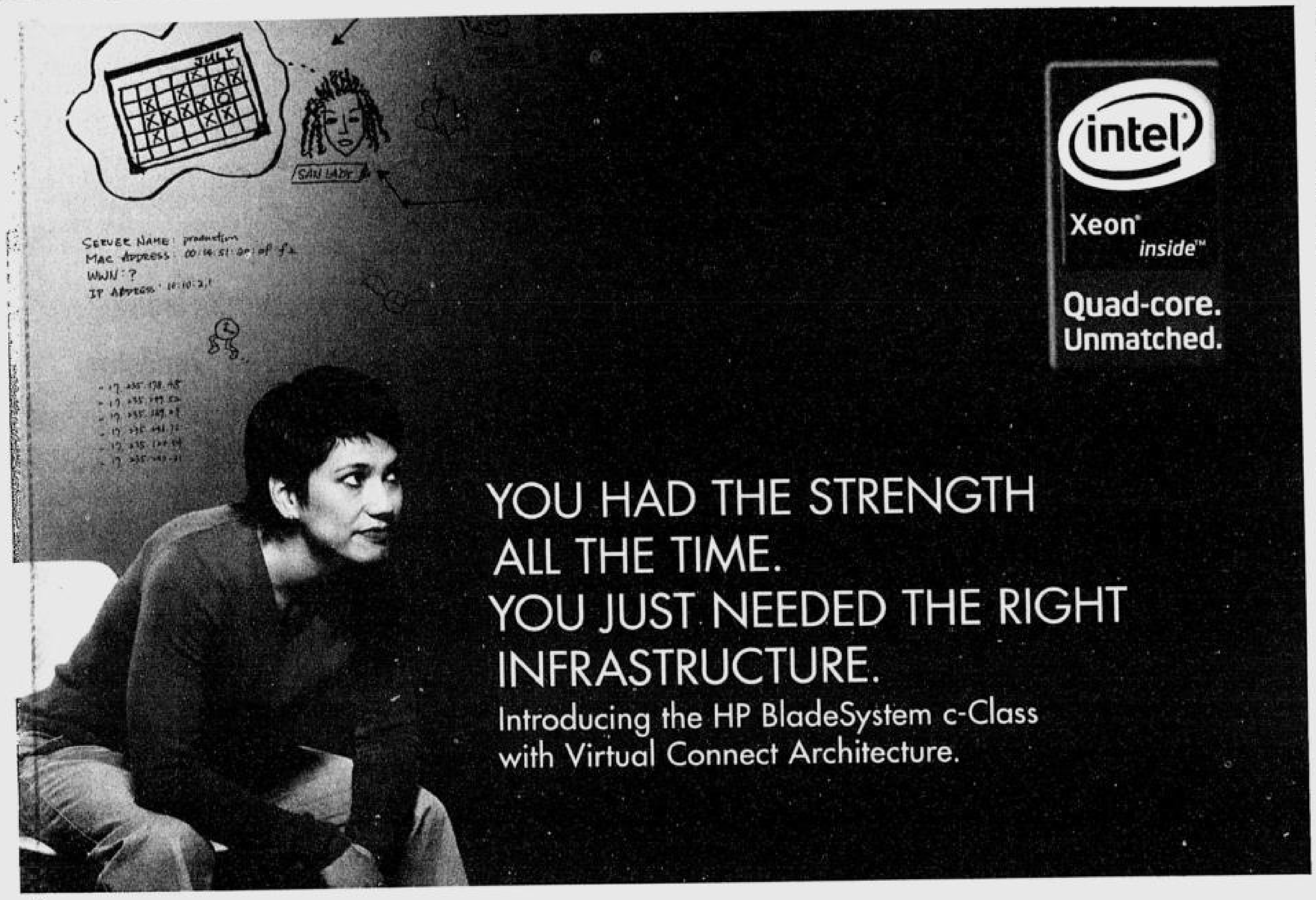
"The index-related main counters that led the record rallies in previous sessions are now overbought, so investors had to go to smaller issues which still have upside potential," said Astro del Castillo of First Grade Holdings.

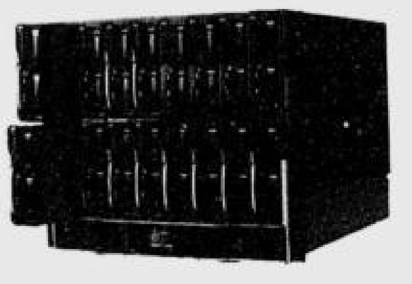
The day's gainers were led by SM Prime Holdings which added 25 centavos to P12.75 and Ayala Corp which gained five pesos to P515.

Petron edged up 20 centavos to P5.30, while Bank of the Philippine Islands was up one peso at P68.50. Megaworld rose 10 centavos to P3.80.

Decliners include Philippine Long Distance Telephone which gave up P15.00 to P2,540.

San Miguel A shares slipped one peso to P65.50, while its B shares lost P1.50 to P76. *AFP*





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Lopezes preparing bid for gov't stake in Meralco

Talks with potential investors ongoing

By Abigail L. Ho

THE LOPEZ FAMILY IS IN TALKS WITH potential partners to raise some $500 million that will be used to fund its bid for the government's 29-percent stake in Manila Electric Co.

"The family will bid, when it's (government's stake in Meralco) on the auction block," Meralco chair and chief executive Manuel Lopez said during the company's stockholders meeting yesterday.

In a subsequent briefing with reporters, he said the company, together with its partners, would submit a bid, whether for the entire government stake or for stakes to be sold separately by government entities.

The national government, Land Bank of the Philippines, and pension funds Social Security System and Government Service Insurance System together hold a 29-percent stake in Meralco. The Privatization Management Office holds another 12 percent.

A Finance official earlier said, however, that it would be more advantageous for the government to sell its Meralco stake in one block to fetch a higher price.

"We are eyeing whatever stake is put on the auction block. Based on earlier pronouncements by (Finance Secretary Margarito) Teves, I think they are going to consolidate their stakes. If that's how they will sell, then that's how we are going to buy," Lopez said.

Right now, he said talks were already underway with potential partners for the Lopezes' bid for the government's stake in Meralco.

"It's going to be a combination of strategic partnerships, equity and loans. We will possibly use (First Philippine Holdings Corp.) as a vehicle, but it depends on the partners, on how they want to program it," he said.

First Philippine Union Fenosa Inc., a joint venture between Spanish utility Union Fenosa SA and the Lopezes' First Holdings, hold 22.8 percent of Meralco's common shares.

Asked whether Union Fenosa would join the Lopezes in its bid to acquire government's stake in Meralco, Lopez said: "I don't know what their plans are, but we hope they remain with us, hope they won't get out."

The government expects to raise about P5 billion from the sale of its Meralco stake.

CII launches home financing plans

COMMUNITY INNOVATIONS Inc. (CII), an Ayala Land Inc. housing brand that caters to young urban professionals, yesterday launched a flexible financing program that offers low interest rates and monthly payments, and the longest payment terms.

The "Homestarter Financing Program" offers three payment options for home buyers, CII sales and marketing head Rex Mendoza said.

Homestarter Stretch, one of the three payment plans, requires a downpayment of 10 percent, or even zero for projects signed up until June 30.

Homestarter Stretch offers interest rates of 5.5 percent a year for a payment term of five years, 8.45 percent for 10 years and 9.7 percent for 15 years.

The other options are Homestarter Swift—which offers standard payment terms across all CII projects, and Homestarter Flex—which customizes payment options to match the buyer's investment preferences. Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

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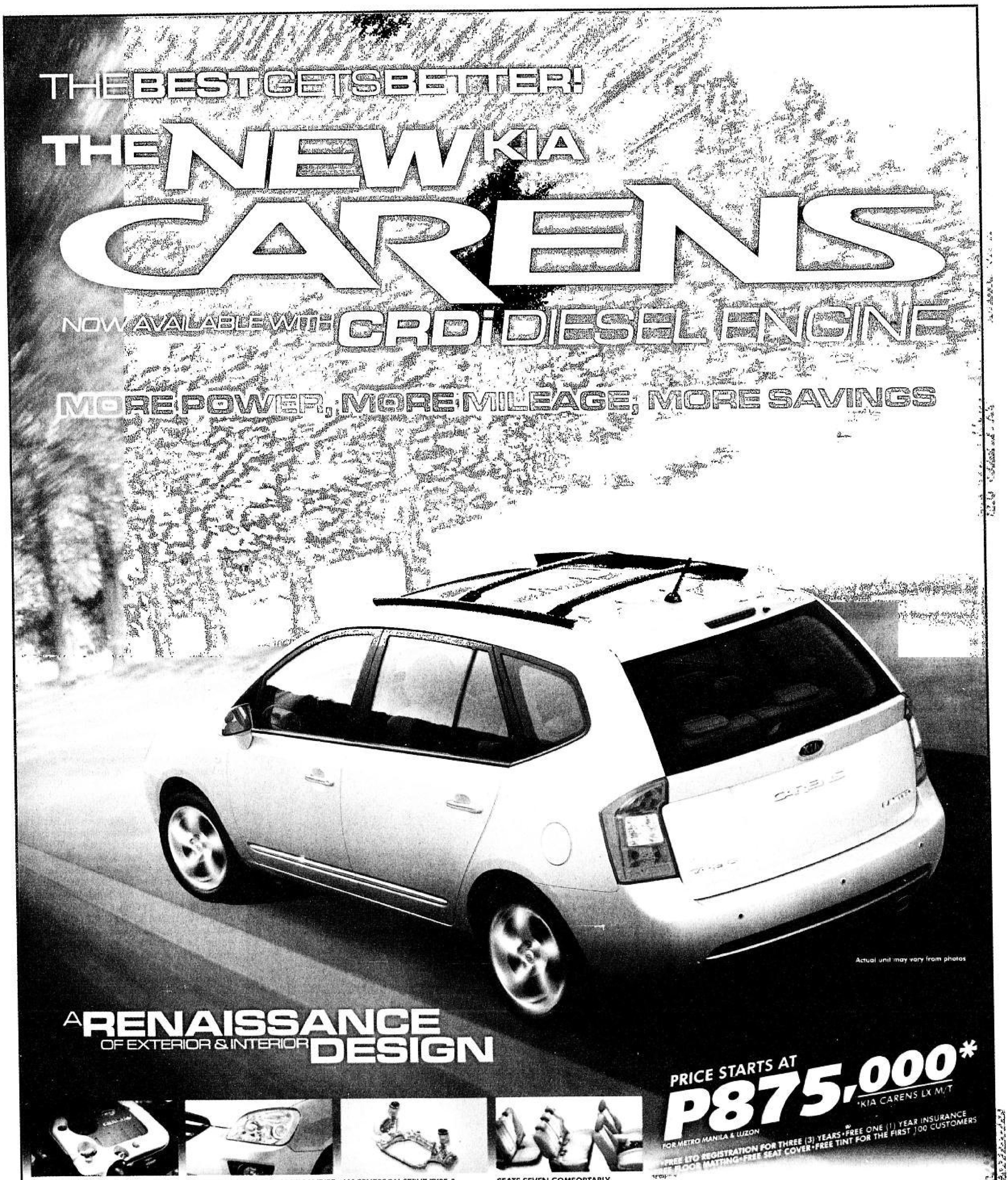
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Meralco seen expanding non-core businesses

Ortigas compound development in full swing

By Abigail L. Ho

THE THREE BUSINESS PROCESS outsourcing buildings, which the Lopez-led Manila Electric Co. is co-developing with Rockwell Land Inc., are scheduled for turnover to prospective locators by end-2008.

Meralco chair and chief executive Manuel Lopez said the groundbreaking for the first of the three buildings would take place in mid-2007.

The three buildings would be specially designed for BPO firms, boasting of air-conditioning and power facilities that could meet the stringent requirements of the BPO industry.

These would have a total leasable area of 76,852 square meters, spread over 20-floor, 11-floor and 24-floor structures.

"Rockwell is already speaking with some possible locators—BPO firms and call centers," Lopez said.

In undertaking this real estate venture, he said Meralco would not spend even a single centavo.

"All funding will come from Rockwell Land, but the land titles will remain with Meralco. It's a P1-billion investment in all, but not all three buildings will be built at the same time," he said.

Apart from the BPO buildings, he said a multi-purpose area—The Strip—would also start operating by August within Meralco's Ortigas properties.

A food company and a bank had already signed up to locate at The Strip, he said.

Later on, he said, the Ortigas compound development would not only involve BPO buildings and a multi-purpose establishment, but also residential buildings.

However, he did not disclose the details of this phase of the project.

For these real estate projects, he said Rockwell would get 70 percent of the revenues, while Meralco would get the balance.

The pitfalls of dollar insurance policies

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General

FOR SOME YEARS NOW, BUYING INSURANCE policies denominated in US dollars has been an attractive proposition. One feels more secure under an insurance policy written in solid US dollars than in the unstable peso.

But, now that the peso has been strengthening against the dollar, the transaction has remained attractive since one needs fewer pesos for every dollar of premium.

Admittedly, there are certain policies that should be preferably written in dollars. For example, if you are traveling abroad, it is better to have a hospital/medical policy in dollars, just in case you get hospitalized. In fact, some countries will not grant you a visa unless you can show a hospital/medical policy in US dollars.

But, in buying dollar insurance policies, one should look beyond the exchange rate. There are pitfalls you should be aware of.

First, every foreign company that wants to do insurance business here has to qualify for a license issued by the Insurance Commission. This means it has to put up a subsidiary, or a full-fledged branch, or go into joint venture with a local firm. Either way, the company comes under the inspection and supervisory powers of the eagle-eyed auditors of the commission.

Second, every person, whether individual or juridical, who acts as an agent or broker has to be licensed by the Insurance Commission. This means he may have to take qualifying written examination, or prove his competence and integrity to the commission.

To go around the licensing requirements, a foreign insurance company issues dollar policies and invoices outside the country, usually Hong Kong. An unlicensed agent or broker, with a nice office somewhere in Makati, represents the company here. Receipts are purportedly issued in Hong Kong. The premium collection is laundered somehow.

Or, you can buy your dollar policy, and pay the dollar premium thereon, when you are traveling abroad. Nothing illegal about that. But, there are pitfalls.

If you have a minor claim, like a week's stay in a hospital, you probably will not have a problem getting your claim paid. But, if you have a claim that runs into hundreds of thousands of dollars, you could have a serious problem. The company can throw a number of reasons at you to deny the claim. Then, you find out that, to pursue your claim, you have to file suit at some distant island in the Central Pacific, such as Samoa.

If you bought your policy from a Hong Kong firm, you can go into arbitration before filing your suit in Samoa. But, you have to hire a lawyer based in Hong Kong, or a Manila lawyer with an office or a correspondent in Hong Kong. Either way, you will be fighting your battle on foreign soil.

You avoid all these pitfalls by buying your dollar insurance policy from a firm duly licensed here. A wide variety of life, accident and medical policies is available. The Insurance Commission has approved the wordings of these policies. You can be sure that, in case you have a controversial claim, you do not have to file suit at some distant Central Pacific island. You fight your battle in home grounds. Oftentimes, you have the commission by your side.

Best of all, buy your insurance policy through a duly licensed local agent or broker. If ever you have a problem on a claim, you will need his help.

Prudential Life assumes Berkley assets, liabilities

By Michelle V. Remo

PHILIPPINE PRUDENTIAL LIFE INSURANCE Co. has agreed to assume all the assets and liabilities of Berkley International Life Insurance Co. Inc., which has decided to give up its insurance business in the Philippines, officials of these companies said.

In an interview, an official of Berkley said giving up his company's insurance portfolio to Prudential would address concerns about its solvency problem, which earlier prompted the Insurance Commission to order Berkley to stop selling insurance products.

Danny Villanueva, former vice president of Berkley, said holders of insurance policies sold by Berkley should not worry as their future claims would be serviced by Prudential Life.

Villanueva said the deal between Berkley and Prudential was finalized only last Friday.

He said the transfer of the assets and liabilities to Prudential, despite the signing of the deal between the two firms, was still subject to the approval of the Insurance Commission.

Earlier, Berkley International—which owns Berkley Insurance, pre-need firm Berkley International Plans Inc. and Family First Inc.—also announced a change in ownership, saying it was bought out by Danvil Holdings Inc., which is owned by Villanueva.

Villanueva said he had already submitted documents required by the Insurance Commission to prove the change in the company's ownership.

He said Danvil paid Berkley $20 million and another $5 million worth of standby letter of credit for the purchase.

Danvil later turned around and entered a deal with Prudential Life for the transfer of the Berkley's insurance portfolio.

Prudential Life president Gregorio Mercado said his company had agreed to absorb the assets and liabilities of Berkley and that the move was consistent with its plans to expand its insurance business.

"This will increase our business substantially. We are very familiar with the life insurance business and the takeover is a natural fit for us," Mercado said.

The Berkley's insurance portfolio is composed of 300 individual insurance policies and about 80,000 certificates of group life insurance. It also includes P100 million worth of reserves, mostly in the form of government securities, Villanueva said.

Mercado said Prudential Life had projected to increase its premium collection by at least 50 percent this year over that of last year.

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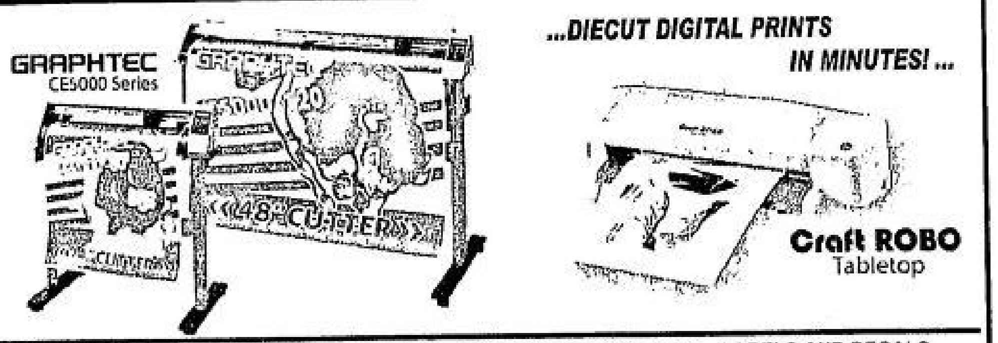

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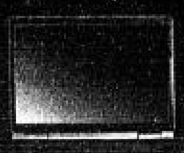

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European firms buck port fees

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE EUROPEAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE of the Philippines has joined calls for the stay of a customs order slapping "unreasonable" port security fees, which are supposed to take effect next week.

ECCP executive vice president Henry Schumacher said in a statement that the planned container inspection system using X-ray machines, as provided by Customs Administrative Order No. 4-2007, would result in huge losses for companies that bring products into the country.

The CAO sets fees of $50 and $25 in security scanning fees for every 40-foot and 20-foot container van, respectively, which is meant to pay for the P5.98-billion cost of the scanners that were obtained under a Chinese government grant.

Schumacher said the container inspection system would further increase the already high cost of doing business in the Philippines.

"We have serious concerns with regards to level of fees levied on companies as it would put additional burden on their financial bottom line," he said. "The government should look at alternative measures of raising revenues without passing the cost to the private sector."

ECCP has 700 member firms that are involved in agriculture, banking and finance, contact centers, chemicals, courier services, electronics, engineering, food, furniture, information technology, logistics, pharmaceuticals, telecommunications, transportation and waste management.

BOC has put up the new system as part of an agreement with the United States to avoid the shipment of highly dangerous materials to North America.

The NCIS X-ray machines would be placed at all major international container ports and airports that are lined up for inspection modernization.

In Southeast Asia, the Philippines, Laos and Vietnam have yet to install cargo scanning equipment at major points of entry.

"We recognize the importance of ensuring compliance with the requirements of the US Department of Homeland Security, but this new measure, if implemented, would become another factor that would sway away investments," Schumacher said.

On Monday, the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry wrote to President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo asking for the deferment and review of the customs order.

"(While) the business community is generally pleased with the various programs initiated by government to curb smuggling and better facilitate the inspection and clearing of imported cargo, the fees ... are inconsistent with government's drive to lower transaction and business costs related to trade facilitation," said PCCI president Samie Lim.

"While we subscribe to the idea of having to bear additional costs that would eventually translate to meaningful gains for businesses and industries, we believe that such costs must be accompanied with a reasonable determination of fees not necessarily premised on revenue generation," Lim said.

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DA to push for export of fresh bananas to Australia

By Amy R. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE WILL try to convince Australia to finally open up its market to Philippine bananas and other fresh fruits.

Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap said in a statement that he would lobby Canberra for greater access of Philippine fresh fruits to the lucrative Australian market during President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's state visit to Australia this week.

Australia continues to ban the entry of Philippine bananas owing to the strong lobby by its banana producers.

The Philippines has also been waiting for more than a decade for the release of the import risk analysis on Philippine fresh fruits.

A positive report would mean that the Philippines could export its fruits to the huge Australian market and close the yawning trade gap between the two countries.

Last year, the Philippines imported $206 million worth dairy products, meat and edible meat offal and live animals from Australia.

On the other hand, Philippine agriculture exports to Australia in 2006 amounted to only $30.78 million.

Exported products include desiccated coconuts, carageenan, pineapple juice concentrates, cereal and cereal products, seaweeds and other algae, banana chips and crackers and potassium sulphate.

"We hope to correct this lopsided level of trade with Australia during the President's state visit," Yap said.

"While Australia positions itself as the 'champion' of the developing nations in the WTO, it continues to deny the entry of Philippine bananas, which have gained acceptance and reputation for high quality among the other markets, including Japan," he added.

Once these trade issues with Canberra are resolved, Yap said the Philippines can export about 10 million cartons of fresh bananas a year.

"On top of dismantling trade barriers, we will also discuss with Australian officials the possibility of their bankrolling high-impact infrastructure projects in support of the agriculture and fisheries sector under the new Philippine-Australia Development Assistance Strategy for 2007-2011," Yap said.

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GCash launches first phase of inter-exchange m-commerce hub

GCash, the internationally recognized mobile commerce service, has implemented the world's first multi-lingual and multi-currency inter-exchange remittance hub in cooperation with leading Malaysian telecommunications company Maxis Communications. This cross-border facility now makes possible mobile international money transfers from Filipinos in Malaysia to their loved ones in the Philippines.

The inter-exchange m-commerce hub gives overseas Filipino workers in Malaysia a fast, affordable, and convenient way to send money to their family members in the Philippines. The Maxis or Hotlink subscriber in Malaysia first registers for an M-money account, then cashes in the amount in Malaysian ringgit (RM). Cash-in transactions can be done at selected Maxis centers, or through Maybank (mobile or internet banking) or HSBC (internet banking or via ATM). To send money, the subscriber just types a simple text message and follows the instructions sent to his or her cellphone. The amount sent is immediately converted into pesos and transferred into the recipient's GCash wallet.

This new service was initially showcased at the 3GSM World Congress in Barcelona, Spain earlier this year, where G-Xchange, Inc. (a wholly owned subsidiary of Globe Telecom) and its technology partner Utiba presented a "proof of concept" for a cross-border m-commerce hub. At only RM5 per transaction, it is also more affordable than other remittance services available in Malaysia.

"The realization of our vision for the GCash m-commerce hub signifies a breakthrough in cross-border remittance services," stressed Ferdz dela Cruz, head of Globe's Consumer Business Group. "We are proud to unveil another global first, a milestone in our continuing quest to pioneer relevant, consumer-responsive mobile technologies."

"Our tie-up with Maxis allows us to extend the benefits of m-commerce to more Filipinos both here and in Malaysia," added G-Xchange, Inc. President Rizza Maniego-Eala. "This is our first step in executing our inter-exchange m-commerce strategy that aims to lower the cost of remittance for all migrant workers worldwide via the mobile phone."

GCash has been facilitating mobile payments and remittances for more and more Filipinos since it was introduced in 2004. Now, with this m-commerce hub, opportunities will open in new remittance corridors in other parts of the world.

GCash has received various international accolades, including the prestigious GSM Award for Best Messaging Service from the 3GSM World Congress, a convergence of global leaders in the mobile communications industry.

5-yr treasury bond rate up

Banks seek slight increase in risk premium

By Michelle V. Remo

THE FIVE-YEAR TREASURY BONDS fetched a higher rate yesterday, as banks sought a slight increase in risk premium amid uncertainty over the government's ability to meet its tax collection target.

The rate for the five-year bonds was 5.967 percent, up 27 basis points from the 5.697 percent posted during the auction in March.

National Treasurer Omar Cruz said the rate increase was a way of the market to price in the fiscal performance in the first four months of the year, which showed uncertainty over the government's ability to meet revenue collection goals.

But Cruz noted that the market appetite for government securities was still strong due mainly to the high level of liquidity in the market.

"The fiscal performance slipped a bit so we (the government) have to pay a little more premium. But there was still much interest in the bonds," Cruz said in a press briefing after yesterday's auction.

Yesterday's auction for government securities was the last for Cruz, who earlier tendered his resignation as national treasurer effective end May. The government has yet to announce his replacement.

Tenders for the five-year bonds hit P18.69 billion, more than three times higher than the government's offering of P5 billion.

The Bureau of the Treasury's auction committee accepted P5 billion worth of bids, raising in full its programmed borrowing yesterday.

Cruz said the latest rate was aligned with secondary market rates.

In January to April, the Bureau of Internal Revenue's revenue collection amounted to P218.9 billion. For the first half of the year, the agency was tasked to collect P373.3 billion, which means it has to collect P154.4 billion in May and June to meet the target.

In the first quarter, the BIR fell short of the three-month target by P12.1 billion as it collected only P143.1 billion.

The government said it would boost its privatization efforts this year to ensure it would meet its revenue goals.

The Department of Finance earlier said it was targeting to sell the government's stake in Manila Electric Co. and San Miguel Corp. by the third quarter. The DOF estimated that the government could generate P50 billion from its SMC stake and another P5 billion from its Meralco shares.

PAL buys 2 more planes

PHILIPPINE AIRLINES said on Monday that it had exercised its option to buy two additional Boeing 777-300 Extended Range fleet airplanes worth a total of $500 million and which formed part of an order last year.

This signals the start of the expansion of PAL's widebody fleet over the next six years.

In October 2006, the flag signed an agreement with Boeing Co. for an order of two B777-300ER jets and the purchase rights for two additional units. Each aircraft cost $250 million.

Separately, PAL signed a letter of intent with GE Commercial Aviation Services for the lease of two B777-300ERs. These aircraft also cost $250 million.

The aircraft will be delivered between the third quarter of 2009 and 2011.

PAL president Jaime J. Bautista said the additional acquisition prompted PAL to consider additional flights to the United States and its return to the Middle East and Europe.

The flag carrier flies to 24 destinations in 13 countries and territories, including three points in the United States—Los Angeles, San Francisco and Las Vegas, as well as Honolulu and Guam in the Pacific.

"PAL is a very forward-looking carrier and its fleet of six B777-300ERs is a great fit to provide its customers the best in service, while achieving increased efficiency in these times of high fuel prices," Boeing Commercial Airplanes vice president for sales Rob Laird said in a statement.

Riza T. Olchondra

Mining firms seek adoption of EITI in RP

By Amy R. Remo

TO IMPROVE MINING INVESTMENT climate in the country, the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines is pushing for the adoption of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative to ensure full transparency and accountability in the payment of taxes.

EITI is a global initiative that supports improved governance in resource-rich countries through the verification and full publication of company payments and government revenues from oil, gas and mining.

"The EITI can restore confidence and credibility in the country as a mining investment site, giving us a leadership role in pushing the mining industry in the whole Asean," Chamber of Mines president Benjamin Philip Romualdez said in a briefing.

Launched in the United Kingdom in 2002, EITI aims to ensure that revenues from extractive industries such as mining, oil and gas would be used to develop sustainable programs and to alleviate poverty.

An independent financial audit of these revenues and payments is needed to attain the main objectives of EITI which are transparency and accountability.

Local government units in areas where mining activities are undertaken usually get a share of the taxes paid by mining companies.

Without an appropriate mechanism for public disclosure, direct payments to LGUs are vulnerable to abuse, and would thus "undermine efforts at revitalizing the mining industry."

Romualdez said direct remittances of mining taxes to local government units had been a problem.

"What happens is that local governments either get their shares late, usually a year after it was paid, or at times, they don't get these payments at all," Romualdez said.

This was evident in the pilot study made on two companies, Philex Mining and Rio Tuba Nickel Mining, which revealed that the LGUs' shares were not remitted fully and on time.

"We're not passing the blame to the government for the under remittance and non remittance of payments to LGUs. We are merely putting in light the gaps and discrepancies. Both the government and the private sector have to be accountable," said Romualdez.

Romualdez said that through the EITI, the Philippine mining sector can understand better and confront issues plaguing the industry.

This reform measure is also expected to strengthen the government's policy of revitalizing the industry and boost investment confidence.

"With financial transparency, we can inspire greater confidence that the country can be a major mining resource block to provide necessary minerals for the expanding global economy," said Romualdez.

Insurance firm cries foul, claims it is not in the red

By Michelle V. Remo

LIFE INSURANCE FIRM GENERALI PILIPINAS and nonlife insurer Oriental Assurance Corp. denied reports that they have capitalization problems.

"The announcement was inaccurate and very unfair," said Luz Cotoco, executive vice president of Oriental Assurance, referring to a statement issued by the Insurance Commission.

The Insurance Commission earlier said 15 firms (including Generali and Oriental Assurance) were facing possible suspension of license for failing to meet the capitalization requirements for 2006.

"The net worth of Oriental Assurance is way above (the required) P100 million and to say otherwise is to discredit the reputable and very stable image of our company," Cotoco said.

Based on its unaudited financial statement, she said, Oriental Assurance's net worth as of end-2006 was P331 million.

She, however, admitted that her office had yet to submit the financial statement to the Insurance Commission.

"Insurance is built on trust and reckless announcements such as this unfairly cause damage to that trust," she added.

Generali Pilipinas, a joint venture between Banco de Oro Universal Bank and Generali Asia, said it already made additional cash infusions to meet the required capitalization requirement.

In a statement, Generali said the increase in capital requirement was only made in September last year.

"Media reports on Generali Pilipinas' capitalization is a simple matter of timing and not in any way an issue of funding," Generali said.

Generali said capital infusions were made right after the issuance of the order raising the capitalization requirement.

However, it said the capital infusions had yet to be formally recognized by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas and the Insurance Commission.

"The actions of the boards of Generali Pilipinas, Generali Asia and Banco de Oro Universal Bank (to infuse more capital) taken in late 2006 and early 2007 are in support of the government's efforts toward sustaining public and investor confidence in the insurance industry through increased capitalization," Generali said.

Generali said the infusion brought its total capitalization up to more than P1.9 billion.

SBC to expand branch network

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

SECURITY BANK CORP. IS SEEKING the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' approval for the planned expansion of the bank's branch network.

Security Bank, which now has 114 branches, intends to open five branches as it leverages on another record breaking performance last year, bank chief financial officer Carlos Borromeo said.

Security Bank's net income surged 65 percent in 2006 to P1.9 billion, with revenues rising 10.5 percent to P6.6 billion. The bank posted profit growth of 50 percent both in 2004 and 2005.

Bank president Alberto S. Villarosa told shareholders yesterday that last year's growth was more than double the average profit growth rate registered by the entire banking industry.

Based on BSP statistics, the average net income growth of universal and commercial banks were at 29 percent and 27 percent for 2005 and 2006, respectively.

"We will continue to strive to build an even stronger base of recurring earnings to sustain organic growth by embarking on strategies that will develop our middle market niche and strengthen our hold on the mass affluent clients," Villarosa said.

"This year, we have laid out our plans to build a more significant consumer finance business and to capitalize on other franchises, such as our derivatives license and our subsidiaries," he said.

Villarosa said the bank started with a strong first quarter performance, outpacing its target, and that it was confident of achieving another good year in terms of earnings this year.

For the first quarter of this year, the bank reported a net income of P758 million, a 40-percent jump from year-ago level.

This was supported by a 19-percent improvement in net interest income and a 27-percent increase in non-interest income. The healthy increase in net interest margins were supported by a quarter-to-quarter expansion in earning assets to P129.3 billion, which helped defray the impact of a 273 basis points decline in average interest rates over the same period last year.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of May 29, 2007)

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	STOCK	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
		BANKS					
17.5	5.1	Asiatrust Development Bank Inc.	12	12	11.5	11.75	70,000
73	42.5	Bank of the Philippine Islands	68	68.5	67.5	68.5	635,700
71	30.5	Banco de Oro Universal Bank	66	67	66	66.5	1,742,600
935	630	China Banking Corp.	900	900	900	900	400
20	16.18	Citystate Savings Bank	19.75	19.75	19.75	19.75	300
124	64	Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	116	117	116	117	139,130
0.63	0.38	Export and Industry Bank Inc.	0.56	0.55	0.54	0.55	5,930,000
68.6	29	Metropolitan Bank and Trust Company	66.5	66.5	66	66	1,632,100
55	30.5	Philippine National Bank	49.5	63.5	49.5	62.5	200,600
68	38.5	Philippine Savings Bank	63	64	63	64	600
72	40	Philippine Bank of Communications	60	60	60	60	100
38.57	13.04	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	31.5	32	31.5	31.5	1,867,800
90	41	Security Bank Corp.	84.5	84.5	84	84.5	24,700
66	40.55	Union Bank of the Philippines	65.5	65.5	65	65.5	1,290,420
		OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
0.85	0.6	Bankard Inc.	0.66	0.66	0.66	0.66	60,000
7.7	1.5	CitisecOnline.com Inc.	6.9	6.9	6.9	6.9	174,000
6.5	3.5	Filipino Fund Inc.	6	6	6	6	6,000
0.8	0.4	First Abacus Financial Holdings Corp.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	70,000
30	27	First Metro Investment Corp.	30.5	37.5	30.5	37.5	14,700
2,000.00	1,500.00	Manulife Financial Corp.	1,660.00	1,680.00	1,650.00	1,680.00	1,900
5	4.15	National Reinsurance Corp. of the Phils.	4.35	4.4	4.35	4.35	6,880,000
2.4	0.97	PCI Leasing and Finance Inc.	2.3	2.32	2.3	2.32	180,000
1,005.00	210	The Philippine Stock Exchange Inc.	585	590	585	590	600
2,250.00	1,885.00	Sun Life Financial Inc.	2,100.00	2,100.00	2,000.00	2,100.00	600
1.94	1.08	Vantage Corp.	1.68	1.68	[illegible]	1.68	[illegible]
		ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
63.5	41	First Gen Corp.	60	60.5	60	60.5	117,500
82.5	40.5	First Phil. Holdings Corp.	70.5	70.5	70	70	447,000
12.75	6.7	Manila Water Company Inc.	11.75	11.75	11.75	11.75	3,200,100
96	13.25	Manila Electric Company A	91	92.5	91	92	100,000
97	20.25	Manila Electric Company B	91.5	94	91	92.5	2,110,300
6.8	4.1	PNOC Energy Development Corp.	6.9	6	6.9	6.0	7,077,000
5.7	3.35	Petron Corp.	5.1	5.4	5.1	5.3	3,130,000
2.2	1.6	Salcon Power Corp.	2	2	2	2	30,000
1.02	0.89	Trans-Asia Oil and Energy Dev't Corp.	1.44	1.49	1.44	1.49	[illegible]
		FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
5.9	2.85	Alaska Milk Corp.	5.1	5.2	5.1	5.2	11,000
2.05	1.06	Alliance Tuna International Inc.	2.24	2.24	2.2	2.22	1,020,000
8	1.9	Central Azucarera De Tarlac	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	117,000
2.75	1.24	CADP Group Corp.	2	2	2	2	10,000
28.5	19.5	Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	20.5	20.5	20.5	20.5	9,500
61	30	Jollibee Foods Corp.	57	57	56.5	57	267,100
1.62	0.89	RFM Corp.	1.38	1.4	1.38	1.4	245,000
4.05	2.3	Roxas Holdings	2.38	2.38	2.34	2.34	2,071,000
80	61	San Miguel Corp. A	66.5	66.5	65.5	65.5	100,900
88	68	San Miguel Corp. B	76.5	76	75.5	76	183,200
22	15.25	Universal Robina Corp.	15.5	15.5	15.25	15.25	[illegible]
		CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
5.7	1.07	EEI Corp.	5.4	5.4	5.2	5.3	1,750,000
4.5	1.06	Fortune Cement Corp.	4.16	4.16	4.16	4.16	66,000
9.2	4.2	Holcim Philippines Inc.	8.4	8.6	8.4	8.6	208,000
7	1.2	Republic Cement Corp.	6.6	6.6	6.6	6.6	76,000
2	0.245	Southeast Asia Cement Holdings Inc.	1.84	1.86	1.84	1.84	[illegible]
		CHEMICALS					
6.3	1.42	Chemrez Technologies Inc.	6	6	5.9	6	1,102,000
0.82	0.5	Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.67	0.69	0.67	0.69	40,000
		DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
0.43	[illegible]	[illegible] Resources Inc.	0.31	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
		HOLDING FIRMS					
4.05	1.7	A. Soriano Corp.	3.65	3.7	3.6	3.7	719,000
0.0925	0.022	AJO.net Holdings Inc.	0.0725	0.085	0.0725	0.085	255,100,000
1.14	0.17	APC Group Inc.	1.12	1.14	1.02	1.06	125,211,000
0.016	0.006	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. A	0.013	0.014	0.013	0.013	236,500,000
0.019	0.0005	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. B	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	41,000,000
9.7	4.85	Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc.	9.1	9.1	9	9	2,300,000
0.017	0.0065	Alcorn Gold Resources Corp.	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	104,100,000
7.3	3.5	Alliance Global Group Inc.	6.4	6.4	6.2	6.3	2,752,000
1.04	0.45	Alsons Consolidated Resources Inc.	0.82	0.83	0.82	0.83	240,000
2.32	0.83	Anglo-Philippine Holdings Corp.	2.24	2.32	2.22	2.3	10,759,000
1.04	0.8	Arlos Prime Resources Inc.	1.1	1.64	1.1	1.64	7,000
566.67	272.92	Ayala Corp.	510	520	510	515	102,050
14	7.02	Bacnotan Consolidated Industries Inc.	14	14	13.75	13.75	7,100
6.9	0.7	Balabac Resources and Holdings Co. Inc.	4.65	4.65	4.55	4.55	162,000
4.75	0.07	Benpres Holdings Corp.	4.5	4.65	4.5	4.65	14,305,000
8.2	3.25	DMCI Holdings Inc.	8.8	8.8	8.7	8.8	3,419,000
8	2.55	Filinvest Development Corp.	5.7	5.8	5.7	5.7	500,000
14.5	5.3	JG Summit Holdings Inc.	12.25	12.5	12.25	12.5	1,506,300
2.65	1.42	Keppel Philippines Holdings Inc. B	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	10,000
0.43	0.185	MEDCO Holdings Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	170,000
0.88	0.1	Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.61	0.65	0.61	0.62	940,000
15	0.69	Magnum Holdings Inc.	14.25	15	14	14.75	3,470,200
4.8	0.19	Multitech Investments Corp.	4.5	4.8	4.4	4.65	8,016,000
5.4	1.2	PAL Holdings Inc.	3.05	3.9	3.05	3.9	1,041,000
0.69	0.165	Prime Orion Philippines Inc.	0.56	0.50	0.56	0.50	31,370,000
1.8	1.2	Republic Glass Holdings Corp.	1.64	1.64	1.64	1.64	3,000
445	205	SM Investments Corp.	430	430	420	420	19,920
0.73	0.115	Sinophil Corp.	0.72	0.73	0.69	0.7	179,650,000
0.24	0.08	Wellex Industries Inc.	0.205	0.21	0.195	0.21	10,430,000
0.55	0.155	Zeus Holdings Inc.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	[illegible]
		PROPERTY					
[illegible]	0.75	A Brown Company Inc.	1.9	2	1.9	1.92	[illegible]
0.58	0.3	Araneta Properties Inc.	0.5	0.57	0.5	0.56	1,070,000
16	8.54	Ayala Land Inc.	15	15.25	14.75	15.25	60,025,600
1.72	0.95	Belle Corp.	1.66	1.66	1.6	1.64	9,080,000
4.5	1.18	C and P Homes Inc.	3.8	4.5	3.8	4	2,546,000
4.7	1.8	Cebu Holdings Inc.	4.3	4.45	4.3	4.45	140,000
0.64	0.24	Crown Equities Inc.	0.61	0.64	0.61	0.63	16,600,000
0.6	0.165	Cyber Bay Corp.	0.55	0.6	0.55	0.56	55,050,000
3.1	0.72	Edsa Properties Holdings Inc.	2.6	2.75	2.6	2.7	852,000
0.99	0.44	Empire East Land Holdings Inc.	0.78	0.78	0.78	0.78	8,840,000
0.28	0.027	Ever Gotesco Resources and Hold'gs Inc.	0.245	0.28	0.24	0.27	77,520,000
1.12	0.38	Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.95	0.98	0.93	0.98	22,410,000
2.04	0.93	Filinvest Land Inc.	1.92	1.92	1.88	1.92	14,042,000
0.016	0.0038	Interport Resources Corp. A	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	5,200,000
0.69	0.2	Kuok Phil. Properties Inc.	0.41	0.42	0.4	0.4	14,950,000
0.99	0.18	MRC Allied Industries Inc.	0.79	0.79	0.75	0.75	760,000
4.25	1.26	Megaworld Corp.	3.75	3.85	3.7	3.8	49,009,000
6.4	1.5	Metro Pacific Investments Corp.	4.35	4.35	4.3	4.35	158,000
0.26	0.1	Phil. Estates Corp.	0.225	0.235	0.22	0.22	16,800,000
0.87	0.25	Philippine Realty and Holdings Corp.	0.62	0.62	0.6	0.62	14,390,000
4.1	1.1	Polar Property Holdings Corp.	3.8	4.1	3.8	3.9	855,000
23	5.6	Robinson Land Corp.	20	20.25	19.75	20	6,099,400
5.2	1.23	SM Development Corp.	4.75	4.8	4.75	4.75	293,000
13	8.9	SM Prime Holdings Inc.	12.5	13	12.5	12.75	8,449,800
0.96	0.51	Suntrust Home Developers Inc.	0.71	0.71	0.69	0.7	1,820,000
0.31	0.06	Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.26	0.31	0.26	0.3	103,910,000
1.74	[illegible]	Zipporah Realty Holdings Inc.	1.34	1.34	1.28	1.3	[illegible]
		MEDIA					
37	13.5	ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	31.5	31.5	31.5	31.5	4,600
1.14	0.97	Manila Bulletin Publishing Corp.	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	2,000
		TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
2.12	1.12	Digital Telecommunications Phils. Inc.	1.6	1.66	1.6	1.64	6,986,000
1,445.00	820	Globe Telecom Inc.	1,340.00	1,340.00	1,335.00	1,340.00	76,770
2,820.00	1,700.00	Phil. Long Distance Telephone Co.	2,555.00	2,555.00	2,540.00	2,540.00	109,730
[illegible]	3.1	Pilipino Telephone Corp.	6.8	6.8	6.7	6.8	[illegible]
		INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
0.39	0.155	Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.3	0.31	0.29	0.29	79,960,000
9	2	Diversified Financial Network Inc.	8.8	8.8	8.4	8.8	8,000
7.6	2	IPVG Corp.	6.8	7	6.8	6.8	1,173,000
0.0875	0.046	ISM Communications Corp.	0.08	0.08	0.0725	0.0725	106,000,000
0.033	0.011	Imperial Resources Inc. A	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	2,000,000
2.9	1.78	Ionics Inc.	2.12	2.18	2.12	2.18	32,000
0.0675	0.038	Island Information and Technology Inc.	0.06	0.0675	0.06	0.0625	28,100,000
1.84	1.12	Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.58	1.58	1.5	1.5	378,000
0.06	0.027	Philweb Corp.	0.049	0.049	0.048	0.049	101,900,000
5.8	1	Transpacific Broadband Group Int'l. Inc.	2.06	2.1	2.06	2.1	69,000
		TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
1.88	1.14	Aboitiz Transport System Corp.	1.74	1.74	1.72	1.72	126,000
6.8	2.5	Asian Terminals Inc.	5.9	5.9	5.8	5.8	96,000
32	12.5	Int'l Container Terminal Services Inc.	29	29	28	28.5	195,500
2.14	0.86	Keppel Philippines Marine Inc.	1.9	1.94	1.9	1.94	[illegible]
		HOTEL & LEISURE					
4.25	1.26	Leisure and Resorts World Corp.	3.75	3.8	3.75	3.8	742,000
6	2.7	Manila Jockey Club Inc.	5	5	4.7	5	120,000
4.55	2.8	Philippine Racing Club Inc.	4.55	4.55	4.4	4.4	21,000
0.76	0.18	Premiere Entertainment Productions Inc.	0.67	0.69	0.66	0.68	6,810,000
1.2	0.42	Waterfront Philippines Inc.	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	[illegible]
		EDUCATION					
966.67	650	Far Eastern University Inc.	800	800	800	800	400
3.7	2.65	iPeople Inc.	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	157,000
		DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
41	6.6	JTH Davies Holdings Inc.	25	27	25	27	5,000
5.2	1.84	Macroasia Corp.	4.95	5.2	4.95	5.2	5,063,000
16.75	13	Pacific Online Systems Corp.	16.25	16.75	16.25	16.5	4,121,300
30	9.5	[illegible] Inc.	26	26	25.5	25.5	[illegible]
		MINING					
0.018	0.007	Abra Mining and Industrial Corp.	0.014	0.014	0.013	0.014	[illegible]
7.6	2.85	Apex Mining Company Inc. A	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	3,832,000
7.7	2.85	Apex Mining Company Inc. B	6.6	6.6	6.6	6.6	67,000
21.25	5.6	Atlas Cons. Mining and Dev't Corp.	19	19	18.5	18.75	3,738,100
14.25	8.7	Benguet Corp. A	12.5	12.5	12	12.25	415,800
4	1.7	Dizon Copper Silver Mines Inc.	2.8	2.8	2.6	2.6	13,000
2.5	0.0602	GEOGRACE Resources Philippines Inc.	2.38	2.5	2.36	2.42	107,889,000
0.35	0.215	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. A	0.28	0.29	0.28	0.29	5,700,000
0.42	0.225	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. B	0.32	0.32	0.31	0.31	730,000
0.038	0.0154	Manila Mining Corp. A	0.036	0.036	0.035	0.035	131,600,000
0.041	0.017	Manila Mining Corp. B	0.039	0.039	0.038	0.038	87,200,000
0.024	0.0075	Omico Corp.	0.02	0.021	0.02	0.02	916,800,000
6.3	2.65	Philex Mining Corp.	6.1	6.3	6	6.2	17,572,000
30	14.75	Semirara Mining Corp.	26.5	26.5	26.5	26.5	29,600
1.2	0.25	United Paragon Mining Corp.	1.12	1.18	1.06	1.12	10,479,000
1.8	0.41	Vulcan Industrial and Mining Corp.	1.5	1.56	1.48	1.5	19,974,000
		OIL					
0.58	0.23	Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.43	0.44	0.42	0.44	1,760,000
0.021	0.008	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. A	0.021	0.021	0.021	0.021	61,400,000
0.022	0.009	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. B	0.022	0.022	0.021	0.021	22,400,000
14.62	9	Petroenergy Resources Corp.	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	44,000
0.024	0.0089	The Philodrill Corp.	0.022	0.023	0.021	0.022	1,314,100,000

BY INQUIRER RESEARCH

SOURCE: TECHNISTOCK

CURRENCIES

May 29, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.743273	1.000000	45.9220
Japan	Yen	0.006107	0.008217	0.3773
United Kingdom	Pound	1.474952	1.984400	91.1276
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.095042	0.127869	5.8720
Switzerland	Franc	0.604926	0.813868	37.3744
Canada	Dollar	0.688152	0.925840	42.5164
Singapore	Dollar	0.486372	0.654365	30.0497
Australia	Dollar	0.609091	0.819471	37.6317
Bahrain	Dinar*	1.971652	2.652661	121.8155
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.198212	0.266674	12.2462
Brunei	Dollar	0.484786	0.652231	29.9518
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000085	0.000114	0.0052
Thailand	Baht	0.021488	0.028910	1.3276
UAE	Dirham	0.202460	0.272390	12.5087
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.345400	61.7835
Korea	Won	0.000801	0.001077	0.0495
China	Yuan**	0.097223	0.130804	6.0068
Argentina	Peso	0.241127	0.324412	14.8976
Brazil	Real	0.382775	0.514986	23.6492
Denmark	Kroner	0.134235	0.180600	8.2935
India	Rupee	0.018398	0.024752	1.1367
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.219514	0.295334	13.5623
Mexico	New Peso	0.068956	0.092773	4.2603
New Zealand	Dollar	0.539777	0.726216	33.3493
South Africa	Rand	0.104671	0.140825	6.4670
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.022425	0.030170	1.3855

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY time—May 28, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen.
** Asian time closing rate as of May 28, 2007

Asian Spirit reopens Zamboanga-Sandakan route

Link seen boosting trade in BIMP-EAGA

By Edwin O. Fernandez
Inquirer Mindanao

COTABATO CITY—ASIAN SPIRIT HAS REopened Mindanao's direct air link from Zamboanga City to Sandakan in Sabah, Malaysia.

The state-run Mindanao Economic Development Council said the direct air link would further boost cooperation between Malaysia and the Philippines under the East Asean Growth Area (EAGA).

Medco said in a statement that although the Zamboanga-Sandakan route was currently being served by passenger and cargo ships, Asian Spirit flights would "bring more opportunities for closer trade, tourism and investment ties between the two countries."

"Asian Spirit, a Philippine-registered airline company, is offering a faster, cheaper and more convenient way of traveling to Malaysia," Medco added.

Asian Spirit will use a 60-seater Japanese-made Weiss-11 for the thrice-weekly, 90-minute trip between Zamboanga and Sandakan, said Asian Spirit president Capt. Antonio Buendia.

"The airline company enjoys free navigational and landing charges from Sandakan government and a 50-percent discount on all aeronautical fees from the Philippine government in support of liberalizing the subregion's air linkages," Medco said.

Yeo Boon Hai, president of the Sandakan municipal council, welcomed the reopening of the Zamboanga-Sandakan route, describing it as "a sign of renewed confidence of the airline business in sustaining business and tourism linkages between Philippines and Malaysia."

"The revival of the Zamboanga-Sandakan route is a positive indication of the strong policy cooperation not only between Malaysia and the Philippines but also between the other two members of the EAGA region, Brunei Darussalam and Indonesia," Medco chair Virgilio Leyretana added.

When South Phoenix was still serving the route in 2005, the number of Malaysian visitors to the Zamboanga peninsula reached more than 2,000.

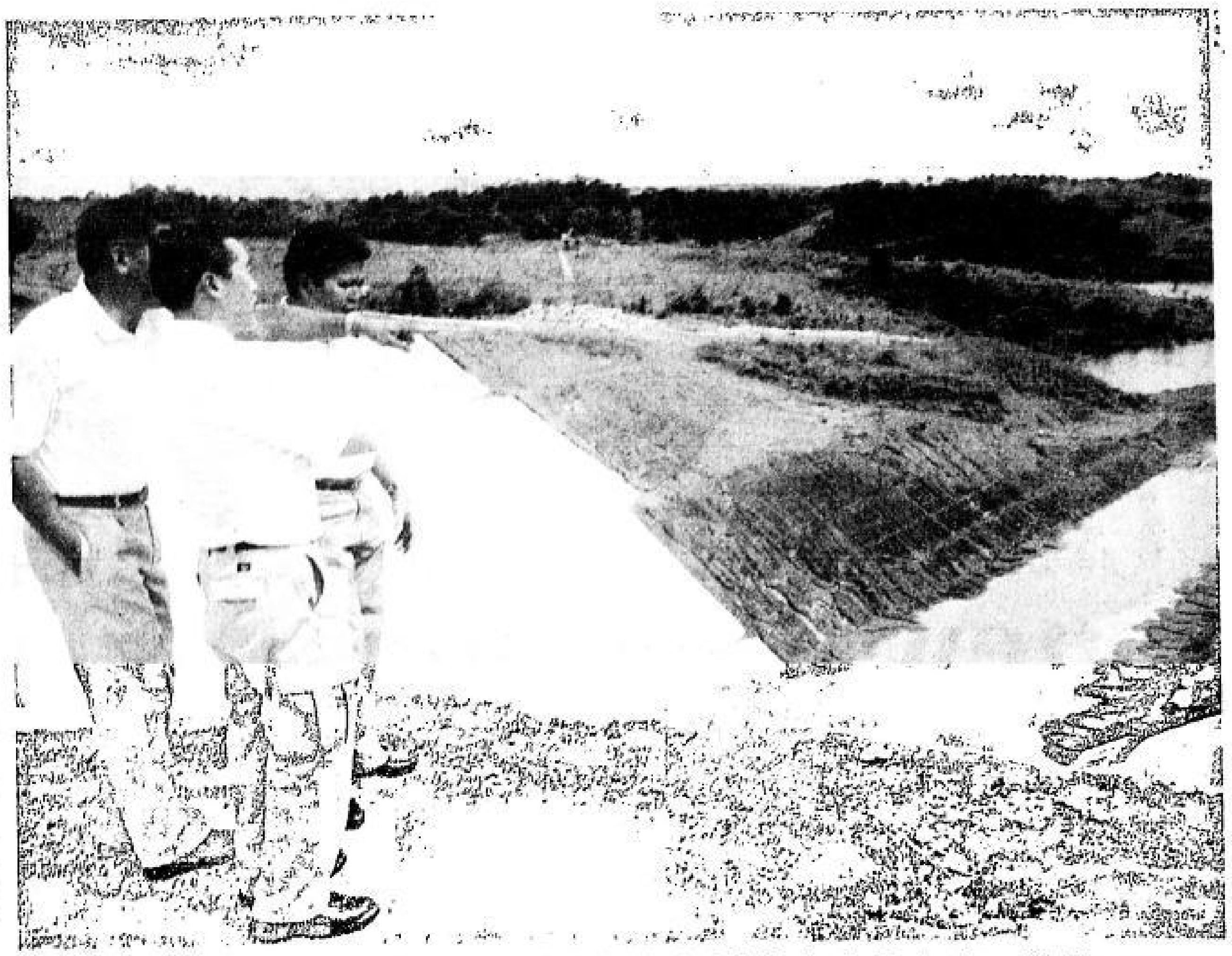
This dropped to 800 when flights were stopped.

Aside from Sandakan, Asian Spirit also serves the Zamboanga-Brunei Darussalam route.

Rafael Evangelista, economic planning director for Western Mindanao, said the air link was the fastest way to develop economic ties in BIMP-EAGA.

EAGA groups Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines.

"We have been trying to push for a strong relationship with our neighbors and the key ingredient there is the air link. We hope that Asian Spirit will be able to sustain the flights," Evangelista said.



AGRICULTURE Secretary Arthur C. Yap (in striped shirt) visits the Bohol Irrigation Project Stage II in Bayongan Dam, San Miguel, Bohol. The project will benefit at least 3,605 farmers and 5,300 hectares in three municipalities: San Miguel, Ubay and Trinidad. The Bayongan main canal is designed to bring water from the Capayas reservoir to augment water supply to the area.

DA-AFIS

RP woos retired Japanese

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—THE PHILIPPINES IS ENcouraging Japanese retirees to teach and work here under a new visa offered by the Philippine Retirement Authority.

PRA chair Edgar Aglipay said President Macapagal-Arroyo, who had just come back from Tokyo, signed a pilot deal with 30 Japanese research and development firms that would allow retired Japanese scientists to migrate and work at the University of the Philippines in Los Baños.

Under the PRA's "lifetime visas," foreign retirees like the Japanese experts will get special privileges in the country, such as the right to lease property for 25 years.

"These are people who want to continue working, but cannot anymore do so in Japan, so we offer them a chance here," Aglipay said.

Japan's strict labor code bars the government and private firms from hiring workers over 60 years old because of the country's costly insurance coverage.

He added that the agreement also solves the country's brain drain triggered by the exodus of Filipinos seeking work overseas.

The PRA expects these Japanese technicians to transfer much-needed technology to UP.

Aglipay said Japanese experts coming to the Philippines could also be farmed out to other UP facilities, such as UP Baguio.

Baguio, Cebu, Davao, Metro Manila, the special economic zones comprising Subic Bay and Clark, and Tagaytay are being positioned by PRA as retirement havens.

Aglipay credited a Japanese consultant for providing Malacañang with the new concept last year, after the expert realized that the country has a comparatively lax policy on retirees.

The Civil Service Commission requires soldiers and uniformed personnel to retire upon reaching 55, and civilian employees by 65.

The Supreme Court, on the other hand, placed the judiciary's mandatory retirement ceiling at 70.

Adelina Sarmiento, an assistant commissioner at the Civil Service Commission, noted that the Philippines "has the oldest retirement age" in Asia when she presented a paper to a forum in Japan in 2000.

Other Asian countries have peculiar retirement policies, according to a United Nations comparative study made in 2004.

Cambodia, for instance, requires more service years from employees with a high educational background.

Group asks Senate to junk pact

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
Inquirer Southern Luzon

A MILITANT GROUP OPPOSED TO THE PROposed Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement (Jpepa) has appealed to the winning senatorial candidates to reject the trade pact.

Fernando Hicap, national chair of fishers group Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya), asked incoming Senators Loren Legarda, Francis Joseph Escudero, Manuel Villar and Alan Peter Cayetano to junk Jpepa, which the group described as "the second Japanese occupation of the Philippines."

"In the name of national interest, we ask Senators Legarda, Escudero, Villar and Cayetano to rally the new Senate against the one-sided trade agreement," Hicap said in a statement furnished the INQUIRER.

Hicap made the appeal after President Macapagal-Arroyo assured the Japanese government during her visit last week that the Philippine Senate would ratify Jpepa.

In her meeting with Japan Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Arroyo said Abe had agreed to sign a side agreement to clarify that the Philippines will not be made a dumping ground of toxic wastes, the issue raised by groups and some senators against Jpepa.

Environmentalists, cause-oriented groups and lawmakers have expressed fears that the country would become a dumping site of Japan's hazardous industrial wastes once the trade agreement is ratified.

However, Hicap argued that Jpepa was not only about the dumping of toxic wastes in the Philippines.

He maintained that even if the Japanese government removed the provision on the export of waste, the agreement was still disadvantageous to the economy and the environment.

"The real intention of Japan, the world's second global economic bully and exploiter, is to take advantage of the country's natural resources and cheap labor and overstretch the domestic market as dumping ground for Japan's surplus products," Hicap claimed.

Credit window opens up

By Irene R. Sino Cruz
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERprises (SMEs) in Cebu and Negros Occidental will get much-needed financial support following the launch of a lending program by two banks and a German-funded development project.

First Agro-Industrial Rural Bank Inc. (FAIRBank) in Cebu and Bank Victorias in Negros Occidental signed separate agreements with the German Technical Cooperation-Small and Medium Enterprise Development for Sustainable Employment Program (GTZ-SMEDSEP) to provide more loans to the SMEs.

The partnerships are expected to serve as a model for other rural banks in the Visayas and encourage them to lend more to SMEs.

FAIRBank has five branches in Bogo, Daan Bantayan, Sta. Fe on Bantayan Island, Danao City and Balamban. It has service units in Mandaue and Toledo cities, and Carcar town.

The SMEDSEP, a development cooperation project between the Philippines and Germany, aims to improve the business and investment climate for SMEs in the Philippines, especially in the Visayas.

It contributes to efforts of the Philippine government to improve conditions for private sector development.

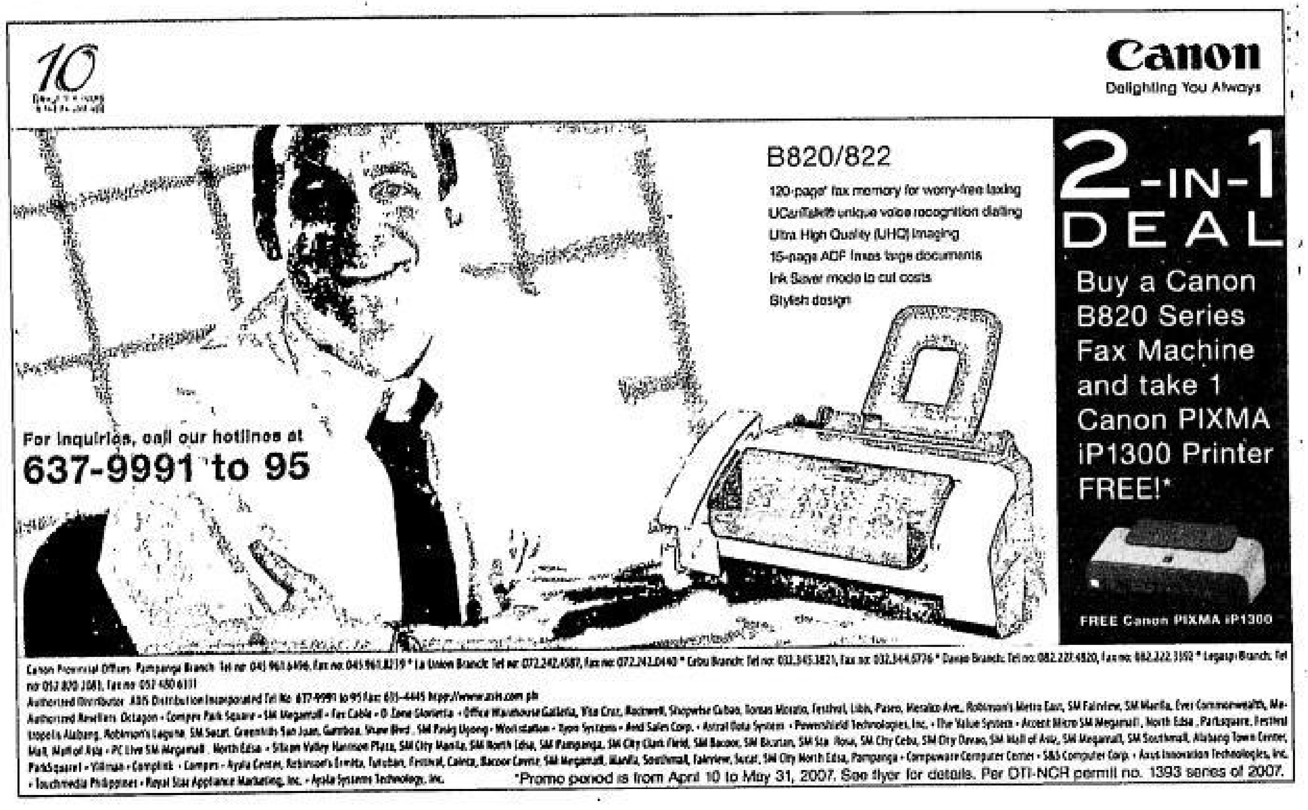
It is implemented in partnership with the Department of Trade and Industry and the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), in behalf of Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

GTZ works toward sustainable development through operations funded by the German government.

For 30 years, it has been providing viable, long-term solutions for political, economic, ecological and social development problems.

To promote change, GTZ is developing the capacities of partner organizations and people.

In the case of the new program in Cebu and Negros Occidental, SMEDSEP will assign finance consultants to help the SMEs.



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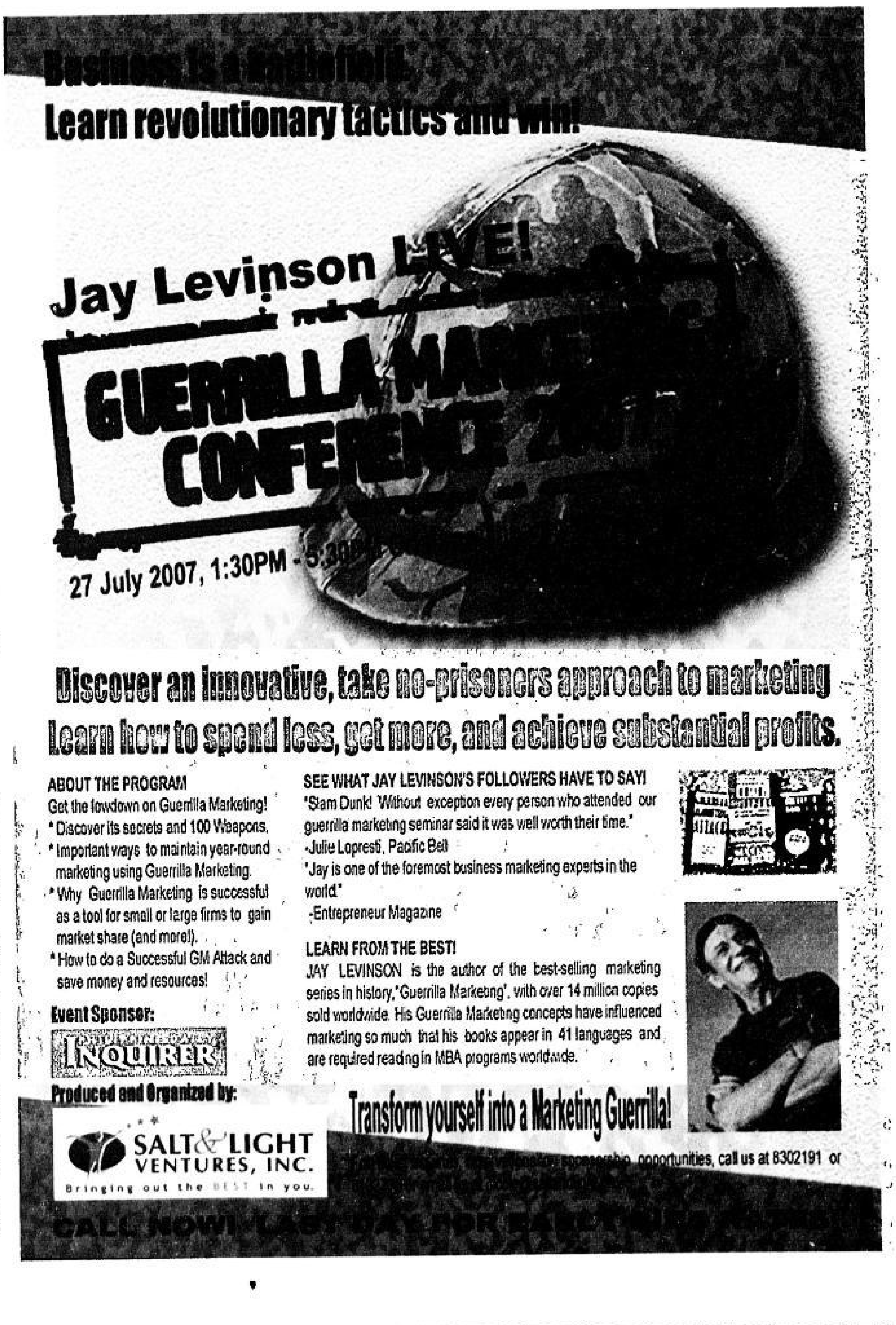

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THE 2007 DRANGO: bolder, more powerful yet more fuel-efficient

THE CHRYSLER 300C in the Philippines now has a 2.7-liter V6 variant

Cats Motors launches new Chrysler, Dodge models

By Charles E. Buban

FOR SURE, THERE WILL be uncertainties, if not changes, in the coming months now that the nine-year tie-up between Daimler and Chrysler is over.

But this doesn't mean the Chrysler as well as the Dodge and Jeep brand of vehicles under the Chrysler group will stop to dish out strikingly beautiful and technologically advanced vehicles in the Philippines.

In fact, Cats Motors Inc., the country's official distributor of these brands, played it cool when it recently introduced the 2007 2.7-liter V6 base model of the Chrysler 300C luxury sedan as well as the all-new Dodge Durango.

Complete lineup

The 2.7-liter V6 variant (costing P2.35 million) completes the 2007 Chrysler 300C lineup now offered in the Philippines: the 3.5-liter V6 variant (P2.65 million), the 5.7 Hemi-powered variant (P3.25 million), and the high-performance 6.1-liter Hemi-powered V8 SRT8 (P3.95 million).

Like the rest of its brethren, the 2.7-liter 300C has that in-your-face styling and retro-esque design that endeared this model to car buyers wanting to feel like a "big spender."

Indeed, the 300C, whether it's the 2.7-liter, does exactly what it was designed to do for Cats Motor's well-off clients: provide an obvious presence to a luxury car market too populated by German machinery.

Strong package

And speaking of strong presence, the 2007 Dodge Durango gives Cats Motors a sure winner in the SUV category.

Although it got bigger and now features an entirely new front end (new grille design and body-mounted front and rear fascias now chiseled, with sharp angles, and new rectangular headlamps), the 2007 Durango still maintains Dodge's identity with its big cross-hair grille, shotgun headlight and high belt line.

This P2.95 million SUV is now powered by a 5.7-liter Hemi V8 engine that provides 330 horsepower and mated to a five-speed automatic transmission.

Hemi engine

Thanks to its Hemi engine (the name is taken from the construction of the engine combustion chamber that is "hemi-spherical" in shape), the 2007 Durango doesn't have the stigma that a lot of SUVs are known for.

Standard in all of Chrysler's Hemi-powered engine is the company's fuel-saving engine design called Multidisplacement System (MDS) that seamlessly alternates between smooth, high-fuel economy four-cylinder mode when less power is needed, and eight-cylinder mode when more power from the 5.7-liter Hemi engine is needed.

With this very fuel-efficient design, Cats Motors said, Filipino car buyers could enjoy immense power as well as fuel economy that—until now—could only be expected from a smaller, less powerful engine.

The intelligent compact SUV

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

APPARENTLY, THE PEOPLE AT BAYerische Motoren Werke in Munich heed reviews of their products. After receiving feedback about the low-budget interior, stiff ride and lack of power of the BMW X3 Sports Activity Vehicle, which was launched at the Frankfurt Motor Show in 2003, they have made substantial changes.

The changes in the 2007 X3 are more than cosmetic, although the exterior has been somewhat altered, too. Up front, the BMW grille in graphite metallic tone looms bigger over a redesigned front bumper. At the rear, a new body-colored rear bumper and new LED taillights are notable.

Interior

The interior of the 2007 X3 is dominated by a new three-spoke steering wheel with multifunction buttons. Brushed aluminum trim on the grab bars, dash and gearbox and revised leather and plastics add a higher-quality, more sophisticated look and feel all around. Spaciousness is not one of the X3's advantages: there is just enough room for five passengers including the driver. The 16.6 cubic feet cargo capacity increases to 54.6 cubic feet with the rear seats folded and the cargo net in place.

The first generation X3 3.0i launched in Manila in 2004 was powered by a 231 hp/5,500 rpm straight six 3.0-liter gasoline engine with 300 Nm/2,800 rpm peak torque. The new top-end X3, badged as an X3 3.0si, has a new lighter magnesium-aluminum engine delivering 260 hp/6,600 rpm and max torque at 315 Nm arriving at a lower 2,750 rpm.

Perhaps in honor of energy conservation which is the buzz word these days of soaring oil prices, BMW Philippines is offering only the 2007 X3 2.5si and the X3 2.0d. Like the X3 3.0si, the X3 2.5si is equipped with an inline six-cylinder engine with a lightweight magnesium-aluminum crankcase and a new six-speed automatic transmission (AT)

Max output

The new 2.5-liter powerplant delivers 218 hp max output, 26 horses more than the first gen X3 2.5i, and peak torque of 250 Nm at 2,750-4,250 rpm. It sprints from standstill to 100 kph in 8.5 seconds and top speed is claimed to be 210 kph with average fuel consumption, city and highway driving combined, estimated at 10.1 kilometers per liter.

The new six-speed AT replacing the five-speed enhances driveability and performance as shifting is 50 percent quicker, according to BMW. Moreover, the new AT contributes a 6 percent gain in fuel economy.

Revised suspension settings provide a smoother, more compliant ride. The X3 is a crossover, based on the unibody car platform of the 3 Series sport sedan. It is equipped with BMW's xDrive permanent all-wheel-drive system and is built for sporty, all-weather, on-road driving. But it is not built for serious off-roading as it lacks a low range and the long-travel suspension needed to climb boulders.

X-Drive

Yet the X3 is an athletic road machine primarily because of xDrive. Via an electronically controlled array of clutches, xDrive instantly disperses torque among the four wheels where and when it is needed. For the first time in a BMW X model, Dynamic Traction Control (DTC) has been integrated into the Dynamic Stability Control (DSC) which has been improved to ensure superior driving stability and traction.

DTC waits for a higher threshold of wheel slip before activating DSC, allowing the X3 a light, controllable drift in bends and a smooth start-off under difficult conditions such as loose gravel.

Upgraded

With an upgraded brake system, DSC works more quickly and efficiently. It reins in the car when it is overextended in cornering or emergency maneuvers. The disc brakes on all four 18-inch light alloy wheels of the X3 2.5si now include Brake Drying, which helps them stay dry in the wet and is activated once the driver switches on the windshield wipers; Dynamic Brake Control (Brake Assist), which maximizes brake pressure in an emergency; and the Set-Off Assistant, which automatically holds the X3 on hills to aid smooth ascents.

DSC now includes ABS, Automatic Stability Control (ASC), Hill Descent Control (HDC), Trailer Stability Control and Cornering Brake Control (CBC) that prevents swerving if the driver lightly brakes in a bend. With this alphabet soup of high-tech features, you will feel confident driving the X3 anywhere: on dusty, gravel-strewn back roads, wet or muddy tracks as well as at high speed on the highway. And, all the time, savoring the smooth Valvetronic-enhanced power delivery, the silky, linear acceleration, the agility and above all, the intelligence of a BMW X model.

All things considered, the P3,750,000 price tag of the 2007 X3 2.5si appears to be justified—to those who can afford it.

* * *

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: Reality is the only obstacle to happiness.

Flat out and sideways with Rifat Sungkar

MY DRIFT

Andre Palma

THE CLIMATE WAS OPPRESSIVE, making many wonder if lying in wait for the Group N Subaru Impreza rally cars to rocket past was at all worth the punishment.

Thank heavens for the smattering of trees which just happened to lie astride the exit of the tight left hand, L-bend that we were staking out. Trading shade for safety seemed a decent enough gamble. This particular corner widened dramatically after the apex. A skilled driver with pace notes could take it kamikaze flat-out and that was something worth a little worry.

Just as I shrugged off another bunch of oversized ants, the boredom and silence of the wooded area was disturbed. Birds left their perches. Photographers jumped to attention and began jostling for position. The steady, distinct ripping note of a boxer engine at wide open throttle sliced through the muted scene. The rhythmic, intermittent sound of tires screaming meant just one thing, the Imprezas were playing on the dirty tarmac of the stage. They would be coming in sideways.

First into view is car No. 1, current APRC (Asia Pacific Rally Championship) titlist Cody Crocker. The rally blue and day-glow yellow livery of the Motor Image-sponsored Impreza a stark contrast to the charcoal gray of the broken tarmac and the lush green of the tropical flora.

The Australian's car then begins to slump forward and slow, all the while rotating in a direction opposite to the corner. Right before the apex the car swings dramatically to the left, drifts a little on four wheels and corrects as it rockets toward the next bend—a textbook perfect opposite lock, lift-off oversteer braking drift or Scandinavian Flick. My hairs are standing on end.

Pure drama

A few moments later, car No. 4 is in view. This is Rifat Sungkar, the Indonesian Rally phenom. He brakes much later than Cody, making it necessary to get way more sideways to scrub the additional speed he is carrying. The ensuing flick to the left is pure drama, as is the sideways stance that his Impreza carries as the blue and yellow cars disappear from sight.

Rifat was definitely playing the showman and he has every right to. Five-time national champion of Indonesia, the 29-year old also has numerous regional wins under his belt. Participation in the 1998 Rally Australia WRC (World Rally Championship) leg is his crowning achievement. Starting 80th in the seeded standings, he jumped to the top 25 in a field jampacked with factory-sponsored teams before a stone took out his fuel tank on stage 13. Rifat Sungkar is the real deal.

The skill and flair of the Indonesian was confirmed later that afternoon when I was able to score a seat for one shotgun ride through the stage. Launched in tandem with Cody Crocker, the two drivers would play follow the leader through the tarmac of the abandoned Singaporean military facility.

The ensuing ride left me stunned. Everything that could be taken sideways was. At one point Rifat was staring out the driver's side window with the car in a prolonged power slide at well over 140 kph. Both cars then entered a large concrete paddock for the lateral-g high jinks of precision synchronized and mirror-image drifting.

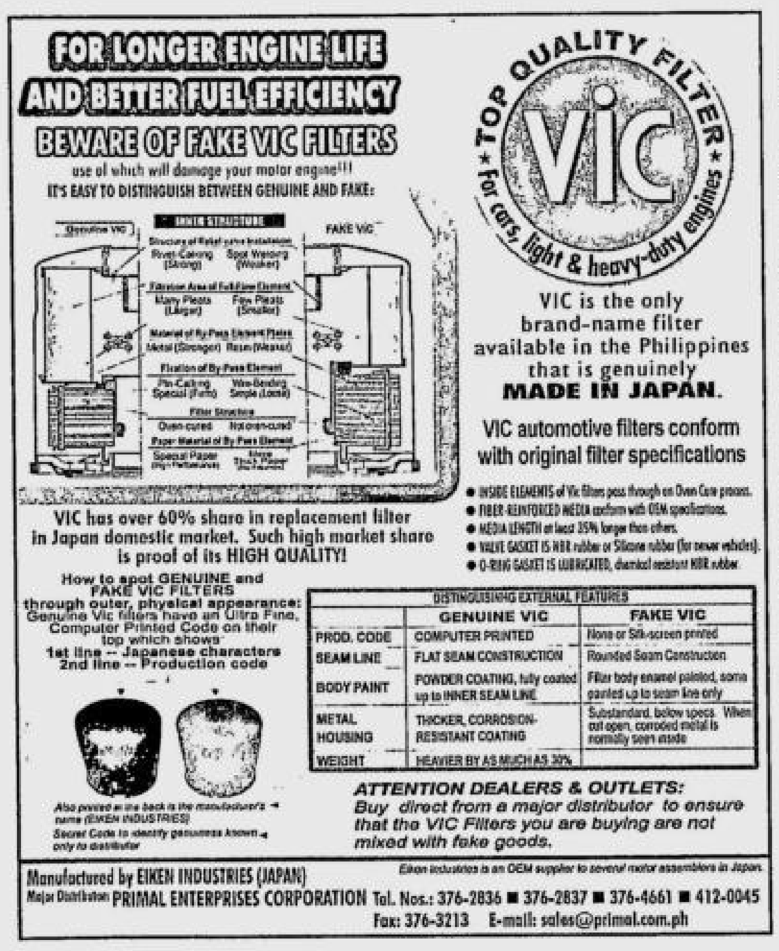
At the end of the two-car tango, we left the paddock in front of Crocker's car and Rifat began to flick his Impreza into an impossibly small service path, still slick with rain and light mud. The car spun and we found ourselves stalled astride the narrow track, just after a blind corner—then I remembered that another Impreza was right up our tailpipes.

Almost parallel

A fitting end to this spectacular ride was about to happen. In another extraordinary display of control, Cody threw his car into an immediate flick, less than 20 meters after having sighted out stalled rally car. Both Imprezas found themselves almost parallel with each other, with about a meter to spare. We all laughed and proceeded back to the service area, picking up the pace and the sideways action all the way until the end of the stage.

As we pulled into the service tent, Rifat and I discussed the finer and hairier points of the previous stage. He extolled the nimble nature of the Group N Impreza, in English lightly accented by both Bahasa and Dutch, and swore this had nothing to do with his sponsored ride.

I smiled and nodded in agreement but I was not merely being polite. I saw firsthand what the Motor Image Group N Impreza is capable of: brute grip and decent power. Combined with the drives of Cody and Rifat, the team has the APRC championship sighted and well within reach. As we parted ways, I wished the drivers luck for the 2007 season. Immediately I caught myself smirking, after all that had been seen and done that day the realization dawned that these guys don't need it.



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How to spot GENUINE and FAKE VIC FILTERS through outer, physical appearance: Genuine Vic filters have an Ultra Fine, Computer Printed Code on their top which shows
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● O-RING GASKET IS LUBRICATED, chemical resistant NBR rubber.

DISTINGUISHING EXTERNAL FEATURES

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PROD. CODE	COMPUTER PRINTED	None or Silk-screen printed
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METAL HOUSING	THICKER, CORROSION-RESISTANT COATING	Substandard, below specs. When cut open, corroded metal is normally seen inside
WEIGHT	HEAVIER BY AS MUCH AS 30%	

ATTENTION DEALERS & OUTLETS: Buy direct from a major distributor to ensure that the VIC Filters you are buying are not mixed with fake goods.
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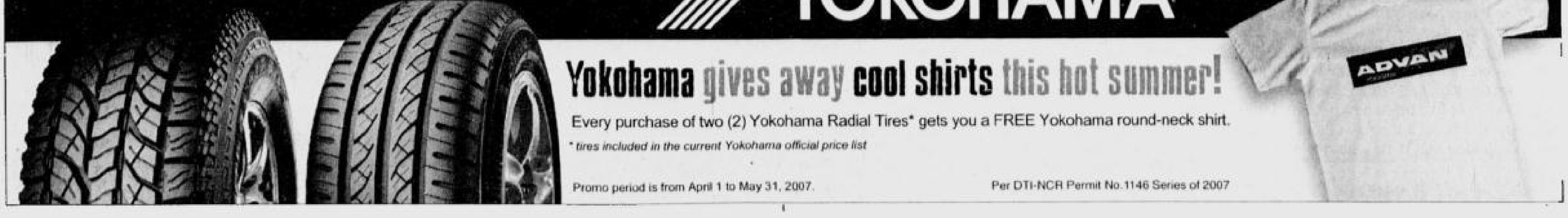
Fax: 376-3213 E-mail: sales@primal.com.ph



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JAC FILIPINAS PAWNSHOP, INC. G/F Ever Gotesco Grand Central Caloocan City will sell all unredeemed pledges for the months of NOV & DEC 2006 on JUNE 20, 2007 at 11:00 am J. LANUZA – AUCTIONEER
(PDI--May 30, 2007)

Central Luzon State University
Standard Form No.: SF-INFR-05
Revised July 29, 2004

Proposed Asphalting of Farm to Market Road
CLSU Compound, S.C.M., N.E.

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Central Luzon State University, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites contractors registered with and classified by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) to apply for eligibility and if found eligible, to bid for the hereunder contract:

Name of Contract : ASPHALTING OF FARM TO MARKET ROAD
Location : CLSU Compound, Science City Muñoz, Nueva Ecija
Approved Budget for The Contract : P 10,000,000.00
Contract Duration : 7 Working Days

Prospective bidders should possess a valid PCAB License applicable to the contract, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least 50% of the ABC, and have key personnel and equipment (listed in the Eligibility Forms) available for the prosecution of the contract.

The BAC will be non-discretionary pass/fail criteria in the Eligibility Check/ Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids. The BAC will conduct post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The schedule of BAC activities is as follows:

BAC Activities	Schedule
1. Receipt from prospective bidders of Letters of Intent (LOI), Application for Eligibility, Issuance of Eligibility Forms, Receipt/Checking of Eligibility Requirements	June 1-7, 2007
2. Notice of Results of Eligibility Check	June 8, 2007
3. Issuance of Bid Documents	June 9 - 15, 2007
4. Pre-Bid Conference	June 18, 2007, 2:00 p.m. Administration Conference Room
5. Receipt and Opening of Bids	June 29, 2007, 2:00 p.m. Administration Conference Room

The BAC will issue to prospective bidders Eligibility Forms at Physical Plant and Site Development Office (PPSDO), upon their submission of a LOI, and upon their payment of a non-refundable amount of P 2,000.00 for Eligibility forms to the Cashier's Office. Prospective bidders shall submit Eligibility Requirements to the BAC at the said address. They may also obtain the results of Eligibility Check by the BAC at the same address. The BAC will issue Bidding Documents only to bidders declared by the BAC to be eligible for the bidding.

The Central Luzon State University reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to Contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Approved by:
(Sgd.) **RAUL D. DIVINA, PhD.**
VP for Administration

(PDI--May 30, 2007)

Rosa Q. Basilio
(Apu Sitang)

The world is a better place to live in because there are mothers. And among the world's mothers, for us APU SITANG you're the best and the greatest!

Ima, Happy 80th Birthday!

We love you,

Rey & Fely, Noly & Rosa, Rosario,
Roberto & Bessie, Jessie & Rita,
Ronnie & Ricsana, Romel & Angela
and children

Upson INDUSTRIES CORPORATION

TO ALL OUR VALUED CLIENTS:

Notice is hereby given that, since September 28, 2006, Spouses **Frederick Go Liao and Maritess Liao** were no longer connected with the UPSON INDUSTRIES CORPORATION. Also, **Mr. Fernando "Andoy" Mendoza** has not been reporting for work since April 2007 despite due notices.

Consequently, any commitments by **Spouses Frederick Go Liao and Maritess Liao,** and **Fernando "Andoy" Mendoza**, for and in behalf of the Upson Industries Corporation are thus unauthorized, and will not be honored by the management of our company.

To date, the Upson Industries Corporation has not changed its corporate name, and has not authorized any marketing arm except through our sales office composed of: Art T. Arellano, Bryan C. Layos, Johnson C. Patricio, Edwin DL. Santos, Joan Romero and Rina D. Mendoza. You may verify our authorized dealers through our telephone numbers below.

Kindly transact business directly with our duly authorized personnel and/or marketing representatives or you may call/see us at the following:

292 Susano Road, Camarin, Caloocan City
Telephone nos. **939-5002 to 05** Fax No. **939-5006**
email: upson_ind_corp@yahoo.com

UPSON INDUSTRIES CORPORATION

(PDI – May 30, 2007)

PAMPANGA I ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
STO. DOMINGO, MEXICO, PAMPANGA
Tel. Nos. (045)966-0604 / 875-0552
Fax. No. (045) 966-0270
E-mail: pelco1_mexico72@yahoo.com

May 24, 2007

INVITATION TO BID

In compliance with Energy Regulatory Commission's (ERC) directive, the Pampanga I Electric Cooperative, Inc. invites Eligible bidders to supply the energy requirement of PELCO I franchise area commencing year 2011. This is due to the impending power shortages indicated in the Department of Energy's (DOE) Power Development Plan (PDP).

Submission of LETTER OF INTENT	**- May 28 – June 6, 2007**
Bid Document availability	**- May 31 – June 6, 2007**
Pre-Bid Conference	**- June 8, 2007 @ 2PM**
Opening of Sealed Bids	**- June 15, 2007 @ 2PM**

Interested bidders are subject for pre-qualification.

PELCO I reserves the right to reject any and/or all bids including application to pre-qualify without stating any reason. For any inquiry, please contact the members of the BAC at telephone numbers stated above.

(Sgd.) **ENGR. ROY M. DE LEON**
BAC Chairman

Noted by:

(Sgd.) **ENGR. LOLIANO E. ALLAS**
General Manager

(PDI – May 27 & 30, 2007)

PNOC-ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Agham Road, Fort Bonifacio, 1200 Taguig City, Philippines
P.O. Box 2102 MCPO, Tel. Nos. 893-6001 to 47/893-1320 Fax No. 840-1575

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation (PNOC-EDC) invites interested contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following project:

TWO (2) YEARS ON-CALL CONTRACT ON RENTAL OF VARIOUS HEAVY AND SUPPORT EQUIPMENT FOR SOUTHERN NEGROS GEOTHERMAL PRODUCTION FIELD (SNGPF)

WORK No. G56-705-120

The approved budget is "on-call" chargeable against PNOC-EDC fund. Project duration is two (2) years.

Application Forms for Eligibility and Bid Documents may be secured from the PNOC-EDC SNGPF Admin. Logistics Group (c/o N.M. Verzano/I.D. Jumento) starting **May 25, 2007** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **PESOS: Three Thousand (PhP3,000.00).**

For the purpose of clarifying certain issues, a pre-bid conference will be held on **June 7, 2007, 9:30 a.m.** at the **PNOC-EDC SNGPF Conference Room, Ticala, Valencia, Oriental Negros.**

Applications for Eligibility and sealed bids shall be received by PNOC-EDC SNGPF Admin Logistics Group at PNOC-EDC SNGPF not later than **2:00 p.m.** on **June 20, 2007** and shall be publicly opened immediately thereafter.

PNOC-EDC reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any informality therein, to accept such bids or to award any part of the work to any bidder whose bid is considered most advantageous to PNOC-EDC.

(Sgd.) **Eduardo C. Sung**
FBAC Chairman

(PDI - May 30, 2007)

PNOC-ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Energy Complex, Merritt Road
Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City 1634
Tel. No. 893-1320, Local 5389

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND REBID

The PNOC-Energy Development Corporation is inviting all interested suppliers to apply and submit sealed bids for the supply and delivery of the following:

Wimax Access under CK-703436
Approved Budget Php 4,200,000.00

Eligibility forms and bidding documents shall be available for issuance at the above address c/o **Mr. Winthrop Z. Gutierrez** starting **May 29, 2007**, from **9:30 a.m.** to **3:00 p.m.** and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of PHP 1,500.00 per document.

For purposes of clarifying certain matters, a pre-bidding conference shall be held on **June 7, 2007, 2:00 p.m.** at the above address.

Applications for eligibility and sealed bids shall be submitted to and registered with the PNOC-EDC Supply Management Department, Ground Floor, Building 5 at the above address, and thereafter dropped in the padlocked bid box thereat not later than **2:00 p.m. (Supply Management Department Office Wall Clock time) of June 21, 2007**. Public opening of bids shall follow immediately thereafter. **Late bids shall not be accepted.**

Prospective bidders shall signify conformance to the bidding terms and conditions, as required, and shall ensure the same through proper submission/execution. Source of funding is from Internal Cash Generation of PNOC-EDC. All bids should be within the Approved Budget for the Contract in order to qualify.

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation reserves the right to annul the bidding process, to reject any or all bids, to waive any informality in the bids received and to accept such bid which is most advantageous to PNOC-EDC without thereby incurring liability to the affected bidder or bidders or any obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the ground(s) for PNOC-EDC's action.

Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee I

(PDI - May 30, 2007)

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ERRATUM

In the ad of the **Department of National Defense, Office of the AFP Bids and Awards Committee,** published in this paper on **May 21, 2007** Re: Procurement of 271 units Motorcycles and 84 sets Digital Camera with Zoom Lens, deadline of bids eligibility requirements should have read **June 13, 2007 (Wednesday)** and not May 30, 2007.

Our Apologies

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(USED CAR AS COLLATERAL)
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Department of Environment and Natural Resources
ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT BUREAU
DENR Compound, Visayas Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City 1116
Telephone Nos. 925-4793 to 97
E-mail: emb@emb.gov.ph
Visit us at http://www.emb.gov.ph

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

on the ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)
for the Proposed Iligan Ferronickel Smelter Plant Project

Notice is hereby given to all parties who wish to give their opinion regarding the proposed **Iligan Ferronickel Smelter Plant Project** to attend a Public Hearing scheduled on June 30, 2007 @ 10:00 a.m. at Barangay Covered Court, Barangay Buru-un, Iligan City.

This Public Hearing will be conducted concerning the review of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) of the aforementioned Project by the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

All interested parties who wish to attend or participate in this Public Hearing should first register in person or by mail with the **EMB at DENR Compound, Visayas Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City** c/o Ms. Esperanza A. Sajul, OIC-Chief, Environmental Impact Assessment and Management Division or with the Environmental Management Bureau Region X (Cagayan de Oro City) at telephone number (088) 726-6243, prior to the said hearing.

Individual and/or organizations may give their opinion in a concise position paper submitted to the EMB/EMB Region X on or before June 30, 2007.

For more details, please contact the EIA Division of EMB through Mr. Ernesto B. Villalva and Mr. Mark R. Saclag at telephone nos. (02) 920-2240 to 41 or email at emb@emb.gov.ph.

(PDI - May 23 & 30, 2007)

PNOC-ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Energy Complex, Merritt Road
Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City 1634
Tel. No. 893-1320, Local 5288

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND BID

The PNOC-Energy Development Corporation is inviting all interested suppliers to apply and submit sealed bids for the supply and delivery of the following:

40-Tonner High Bed Trailer and 60-Tonner Low-Bed Semi-Trailer
under FDM 73514-5
Approved Budget: PHP 6,966,000.00

Eligibility forms and bidding documents shall be available for issuance at the above address **c/o Mr. Alvin Jose A. Gomez starting May 30, 2007** and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of PHP 1,000.00.

For purposes of clarifying certain matters, a pre-bidding conference shall be held on **June 7, 2007, 10:00 a.m.** at the above address.

Applications for eligibility and sealed bids shall be submitted to and registered with the PNOC-EDC Supply Management Department at the above address, and thereafter dropped in the padlocked bid box thereat not later than **2:00 p.m. (Supply Management Department Office Wall Clock time) of June 13, 2007**. Public opening of bids shall follow immediately thereafter. **Late bids shall not be accepted.**

Prospective bidders shall signify conformance to the bidding terms and conditions, as required, and shall ensure the same through proper submission/execution. Source of funding is from Internal Cash Generation of PNOC-EDC. All bids should be within the Approved Budget for the Contract in order to qualify.

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation reserves the right to annul the bidding process, to reject any or all bids, to waive any informality in the bids received and to accept such bid which is most advantageous to PNOC-EDC without thereby incurring liability to the affected bidder or bidders or any obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the ground(s) for PNOC-EDC's action.

Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee I

(PDI - May 30, 2007)

OBITUARIES

"...absent from the body to be present with the Lord."
2 Corinthians 5:8

We Lovingly Remember
1st Death Anniversary of
Telesforo C. Magarzo
who died on May 30, 2006.

Masses will be held at the Garden of Memories (Pateros)
3p.m., May 30, 2007.

More Classified Ads

Department of Agrarian Reform-Cabanatuan	A28
Dr. Jose Fabella Memorial Hospital Cebu Port Authority Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Department of Labor-NCR	A29

"God's garden must be beautiful...He only takes the best..."

In Loving Memory of our Beloved

JULIE ANNE L. EVORA

Always in our thoughts and prayers, on the anniversary of our beloved POT, we have offered Holy Masses for her eternal peace and salvation. Pls. say a prayer for her too.

St. Thomas Moore Henderson, *Nevada* .... 8:30 a.m.
St. Augustine's Cathedral, *Cag. De Oro* .... 6:00 a.m.
Fatima Chapel, *Cag. De Oro* .... 6:00 a.m.
Sto. Niño Cathedral, *Calapan City* .... 6:00 a.m.
San Nicolas Tolentino, *Naujan, Or. Mdo*. .... 6:30 a.m.

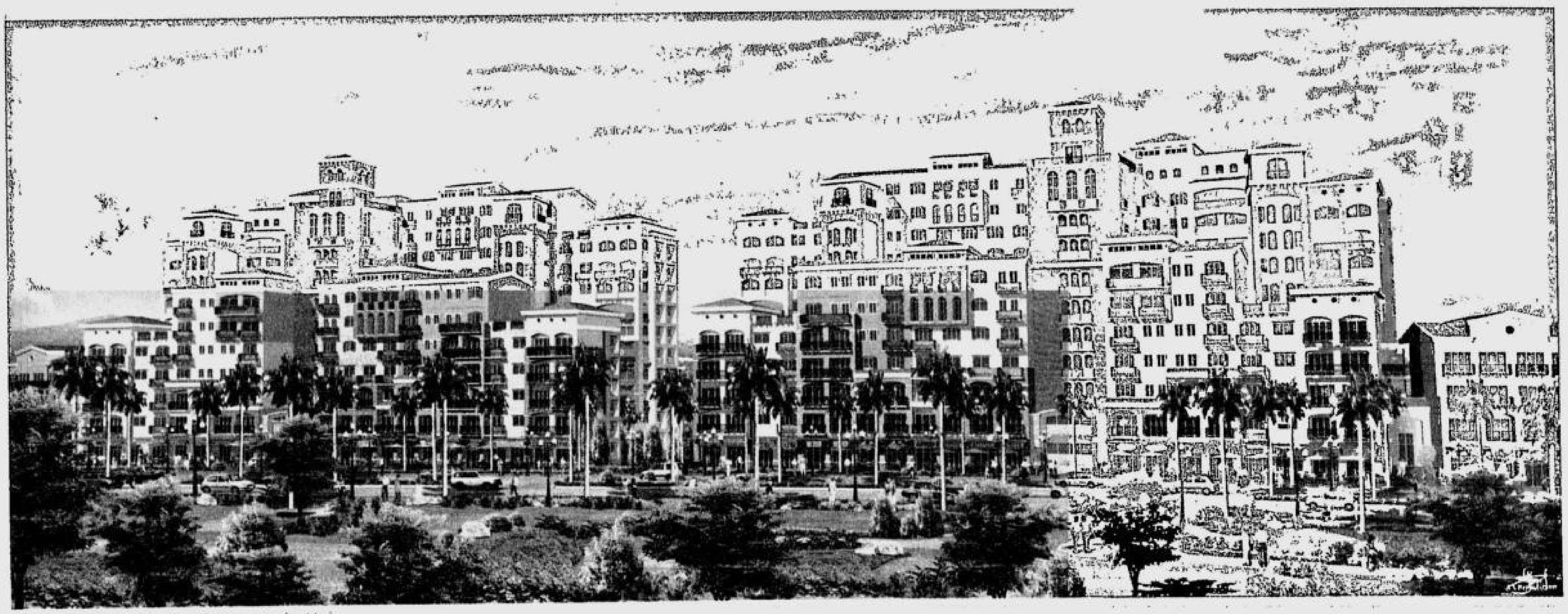
"Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."
Matthew 11:28

Message of Thanks

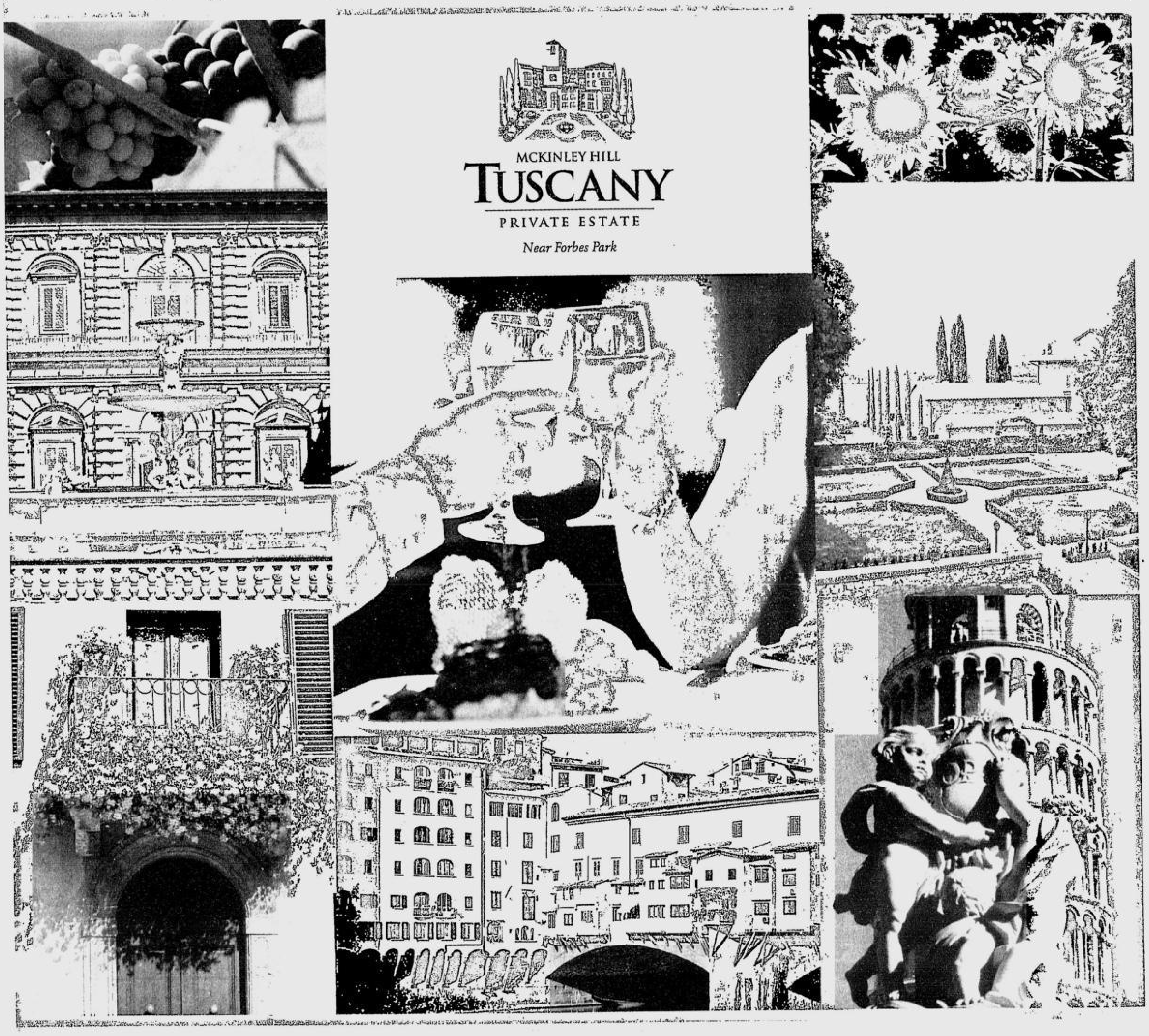
We, the family of the late

Amador Co Golamco

wish to convey our deepest appreciation
to all of you, our relatives and friends,
who spent precious time with us, sent
flowers, mass cards, gave donations, or
in some other way expressed your love,
concern and support in celebration of
Amador's coming home to his Creator.



Inspired by the most beautiful region in Italy



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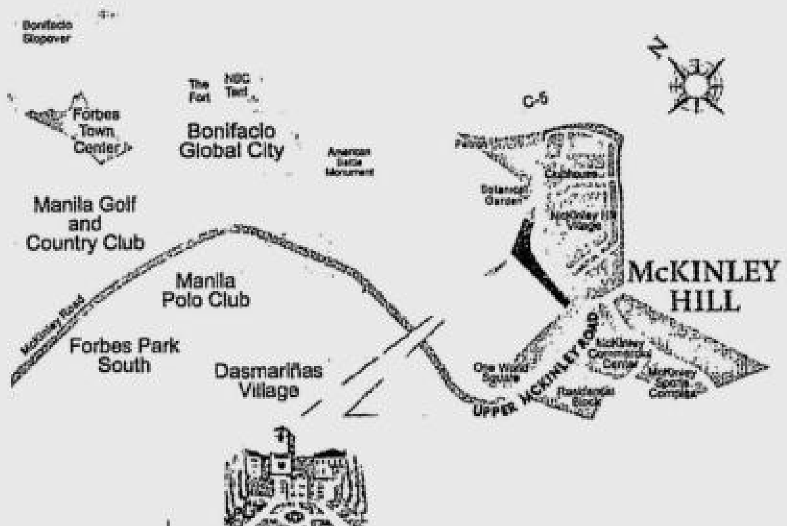
TUSCANY
PRIVATE ESTATE
Near Forbes Park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The Fort
NBC Tent
Forbes Town Center
Bonifacio Global City
American Battle Monument
C-5
Manila Golf and Country Club
Manila Polo Club
McKinley Road
Forbes Park South
Dasmariñas Village
Botanical Garden
Clubhouse
McKinley Hill Village
McKINLEY HILL
One World Square
UPPER McKINLEY ROAD
McKinley Commercial Center
Residential Block
McKinley Sports Complex
N

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2bU! STYLE

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Editor **Chelo Banal-Formoso**

Chief of Correspondents **Pam Pastor**

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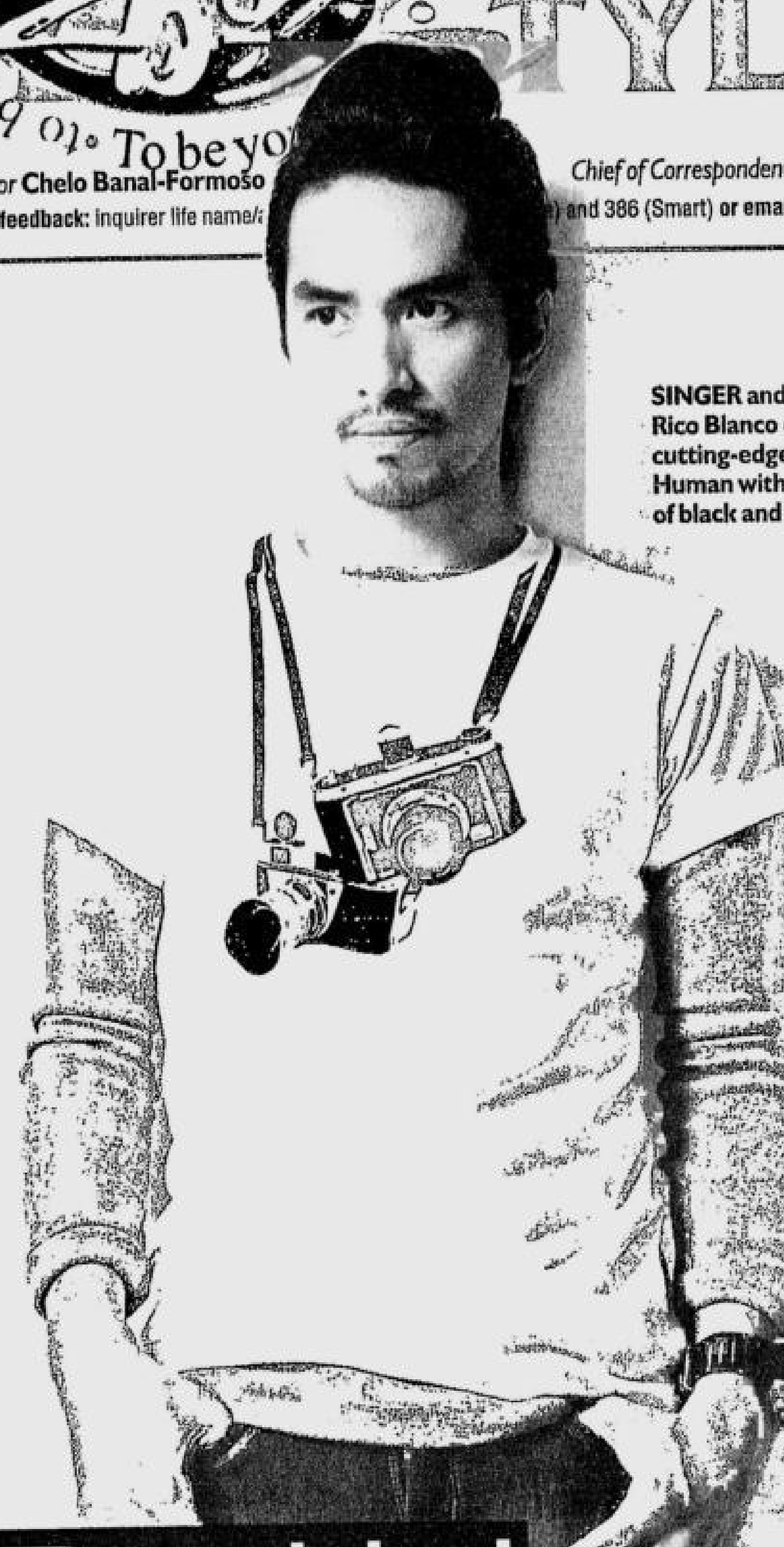
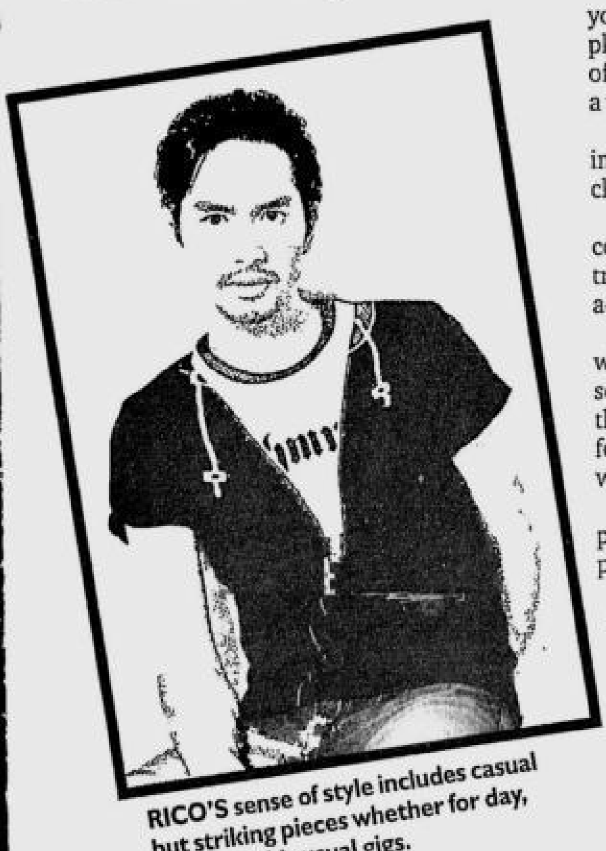


SINGER and songwriter Rico Blanco designs for cutting-edge style brand Human with a collection of black and white tees.

Rockin' Rico

By Bianca Consunji
2bU! Correspondent

AS A MUSICIAN, RICO BLANCO needs no introduction. As frontman of the famous OPM band Rivermaya, he has brought to life songs such as "You'll Be Safe Here" and "Liwanag sa Dilim."



RICO'S sense of style includes casual but striking pieces whether for day, events, or his usual gigs.

Blanco has also written songs for artists like Sugarfree, Mojofly, and The Dawn, among others.

However, what many people people don't know is that Blanco, aside from being a musician, dabbles in visual arts as well, specializing in oil paintings and photography.

"Art is one of those fun things where, if you're really into it, it's hard to stay in just one place," Blanco said. "For me, art is some sort of ecosystem, one form that cannot survive in a vacuum without the others."

Blanco was approached recently by clothing brand Human to design a special line of clothing for men.

Human's Suyen Lim said, "Through this collaboration, we want Rico's style to be translated into the products and make them accessible to our consumers.

"Rico is highly creative. One never knows what he'll think of next, whether it's another song spun out of his imagination or random thoughts, or maybe another work of art. But for sure it will always be a hit. That's why we're so excited about this new line."

Blanco said, "This new endeavor is an expansion of the canvas on which I spill my paint. I'm stoked about it."

He added, "The way I'm doing it is the same as with my other crafts: no over-thinking, mostly imagination and gut feel. That's how I like to enjoy my art."

ROCKIN'/ C3

RICO offers a series of illustrated tees that uniquely capture his personal style and Human's individualistic spirit.

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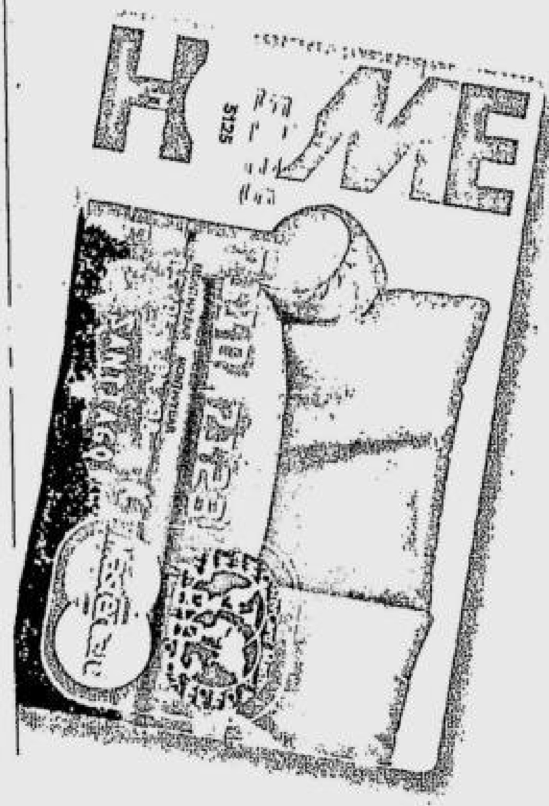
See separate flyer or application form for details.



Best Buddy for my ideas

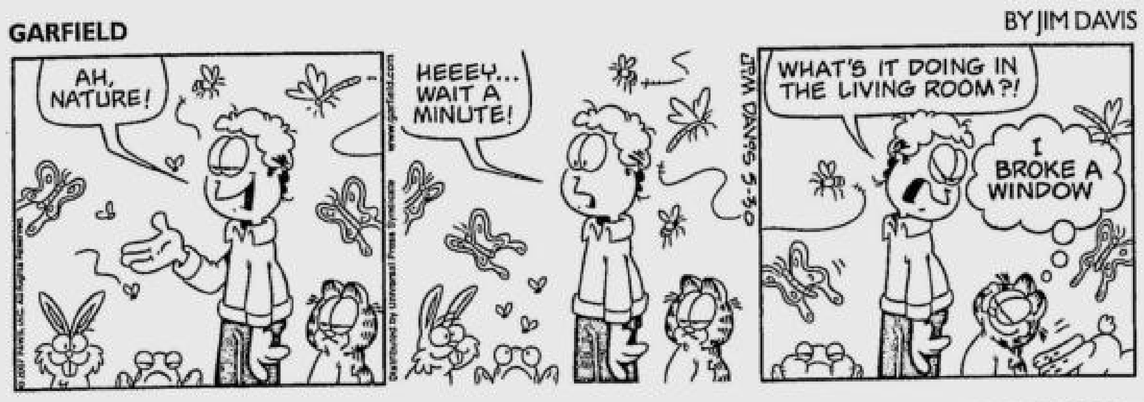
I just love modern gadgets! Computers and cell phones help me with my work but 2 items top my list as best companions: my Corona Blue Feather and Green Apple Notebooks. I just flip it open and write and ideas start flowing from my active mind. Every page [illegible] smooth, clean and [illegible] notes stand out [illegible] and readable. The [illegible] output always spells [illegible] every semester, year after year.

The Corona Blue Feather and Green Apple Notebooks—ever [illegible] classics that never go out of style!

CORONA
NOTED FOR EXCELLENCE

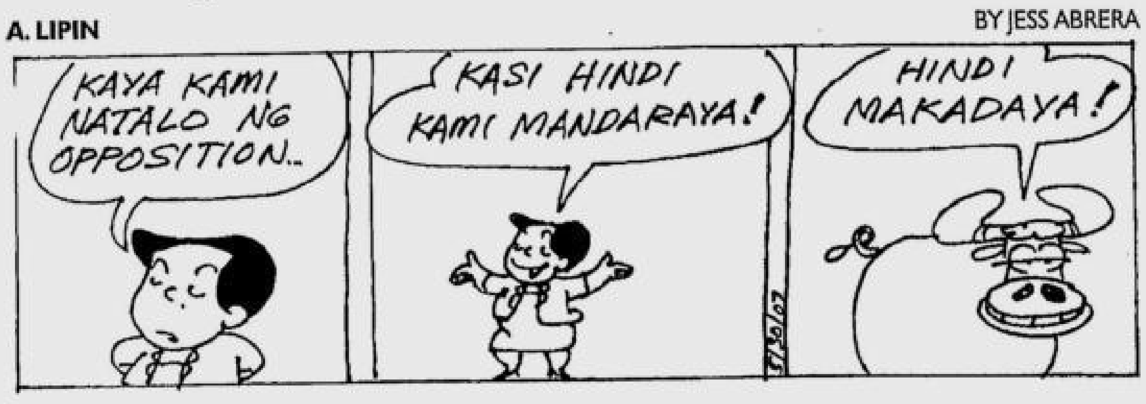
GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS


AH, NATURE!
HEEEY... WAIT A MINUTE!
WHAT'S IT DOING IN THE LIVING ROOM?!
I BROKE A WINDOW
JIM DAVIS 5-30

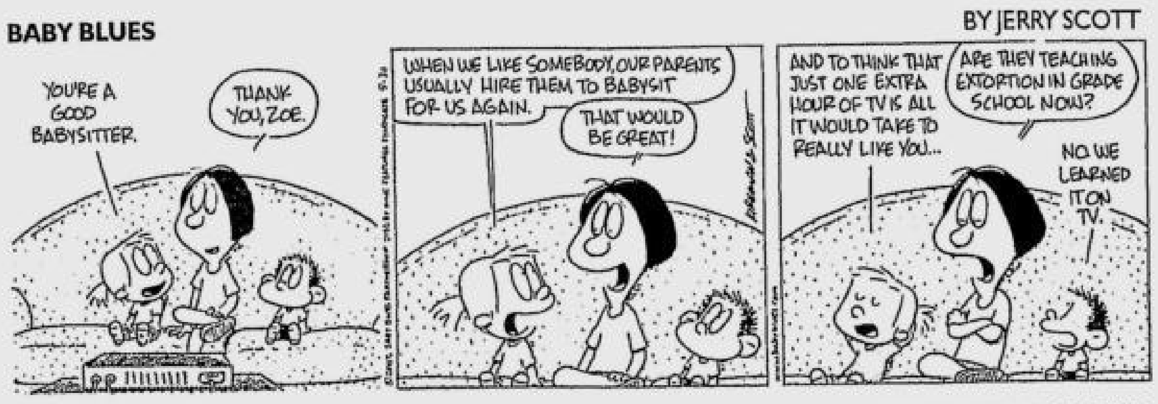
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


KAYA KAMI NATALO NG OPPOSITION..
KASI HINDI KAMI MANDARAYA!
HINDI MAKADAYA!

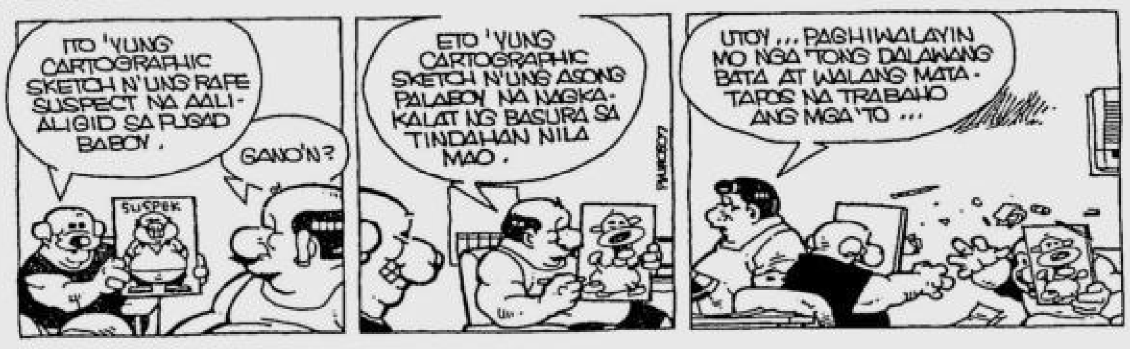
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


YOU'RE A GOOD BABYSITTER.
THANK YOU, ZOE.
WHEN WE LIKE SOMEBODY, OUR PARENTS USUALLY HIRE THEM TO BABYSIT FOR US AGAIN.
THAT WOULD BE GREAT!
AND TO THINK THAT JUST ONE EXTRA HOUR OF TV IS ALL IT WOULD TAKE TO REALLY LIKE YOU...
ARE THEY TEACHING EXTORTION IN GRADE SCHOOL NOW?
NO. WE LEARNED IT ON TV.

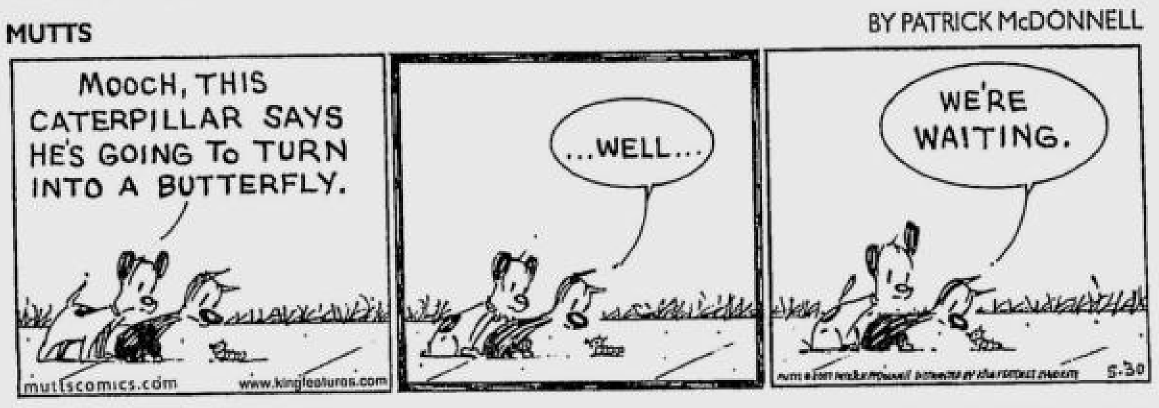
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


ITO 'YUNG CARTOGRAPHIC SKETCH N'UNG RAPE SUSPECT NA AALI-ALIGID SA PUGAD BABOY.
GANO'N?
SUSPEK
ETO 'YUNG CARTOGRAPHIC SKETCH N'UNG ASONG PALABOY NA NAGKA-KALAT NG BASURA SA TINDAHAN NILA MAO.
UTOY... PAGHIWALAYIN MO NGA 'TONG DALAWANG BATA AT WALANG MATA-TAPOS NA TRABAHO ANG MGA 'TO...

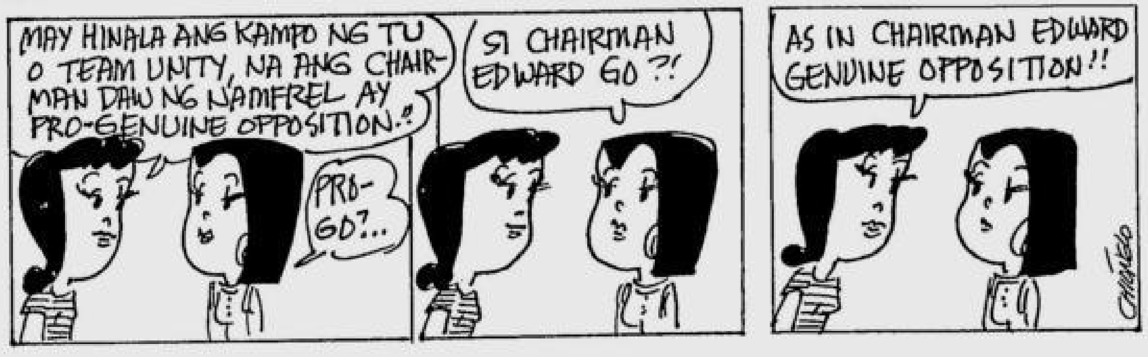
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


MOOCH, THIS CATERPILLAR SAYS HE'S GOING TO TURN INTO A BUTTERFLY.
...WELL...
WE'RE WAITING.
muttscomics.com
www.kingfeatures.com
5-30

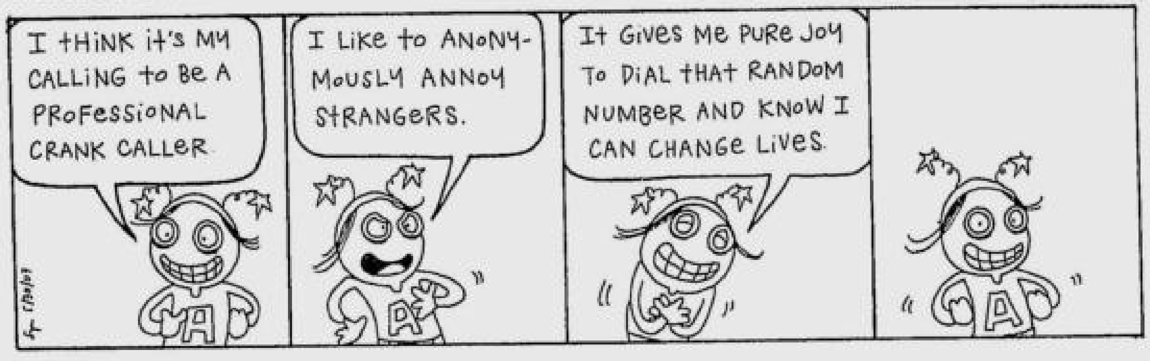
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


MAY HINALA ANG KAMPO NG TU O TEAM UNITY, NA ANG CHAIRMAN DAW NG NAMFREL AY PRO-GENUINE OPPOSITION.!
PRO-GO?...
SI CHAIRMAN EDWARD GO ?!
AS IN CHAIRMAN EDWARD GENUINE OPPOSITION!!
CHIONGLO

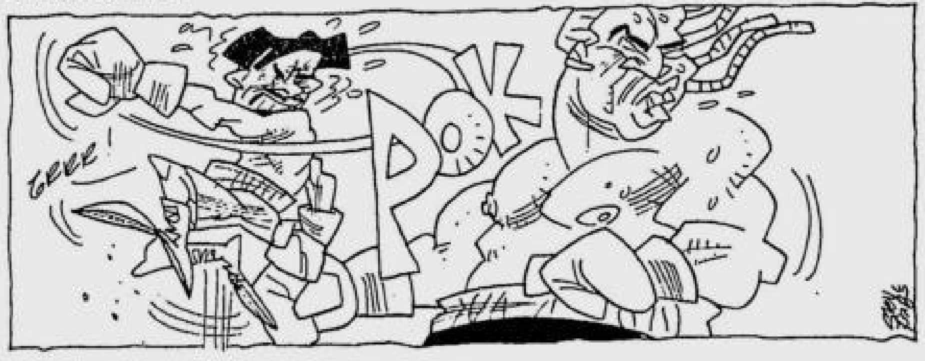
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


I tHINK it's MY CALLING to Be A PRoFeSSioNAL CRANK CALLeR
I Like to ANoNY-MoUSLY ANNoY StRANGeRS.
It Gives Me PuRe Joy To DiAL tHAt RANDoM NUMBeR AND KNoW I CAN CHANGe Lives.

DIVINE COMEDY

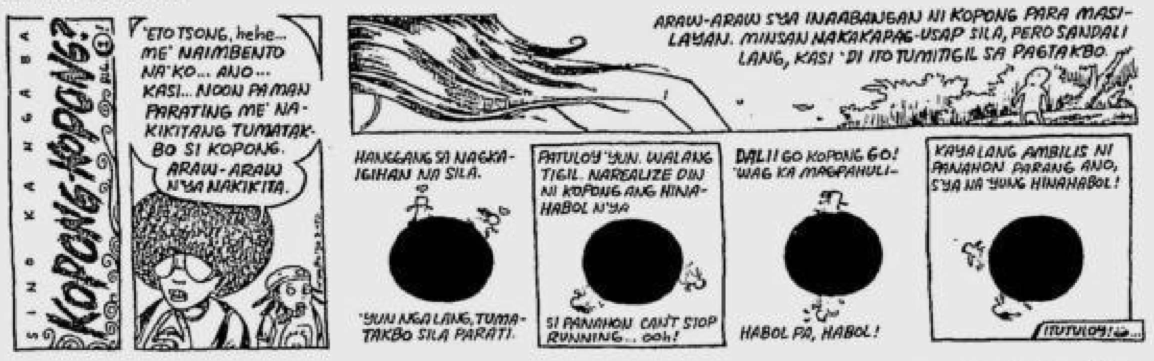
BY STEVEN PABALINAS



SA SOBRANG GALIT NI PACMAN DAHIL TINALO LANG SYA NG ISANG BABAE SA ELEKSYON, TINUMBA NYA PATI ANG UNDISPUTED HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION NA SI LENNOX LEWIS

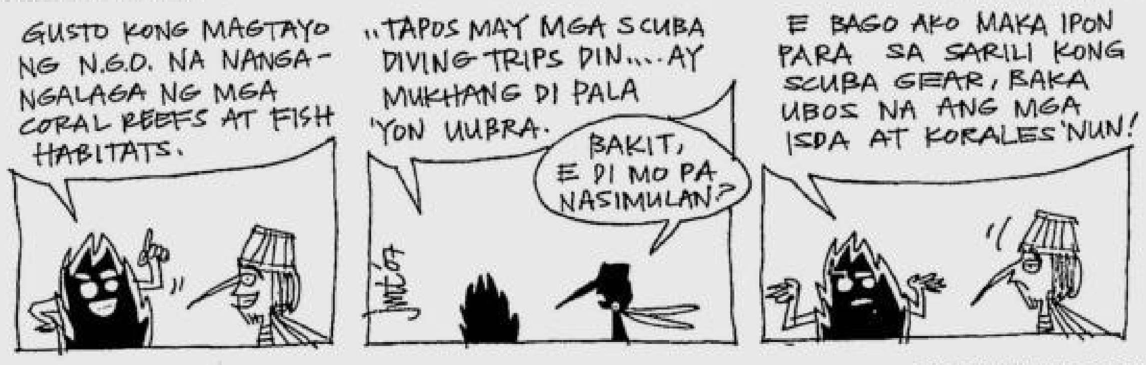
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


SINO KA NGA BA KOPONG-KOPONG?
'ETO TSONG, hehe... ME' NAIMBENTO NA'KO... ANO... KASI... NOON PA MAN PARATING ME' NAKIKITANG TUMATAKBO SI KOPONG. ARAW-ARAW N'YA NAKIKITA.
ARAW-ARAW S'YA INAABANGAN NI KOPONG PARA MASILAYAN. MINSAN NAKAKAPAG-USAP SILA, PERO SANDALI LANG, KASI 'DI ITO TUMITIGIL SA PAGTAKBO.
HANGGANG SA NAGKA-IGIHAN NA SILA.
'YUN NGA LANG, TUMATAKBO SILA PARATI.
PATULOY 'YUN. WALANG TIGIL. NAREALIZE DIN NI KOPONG ANG HINAHABOL N'YA
SI PANAHON CAN'T STOP RUNNING... ooh!
DALI! GO KOPONG GO! 'WAG KA MAGPAHULI-
HABOL PA, HABOL!
KAYA LANG AMBILIS NI PANAHON PARANG ANO, S'YA NA 'YUNG HINAHABOL!
ITUTULOY!

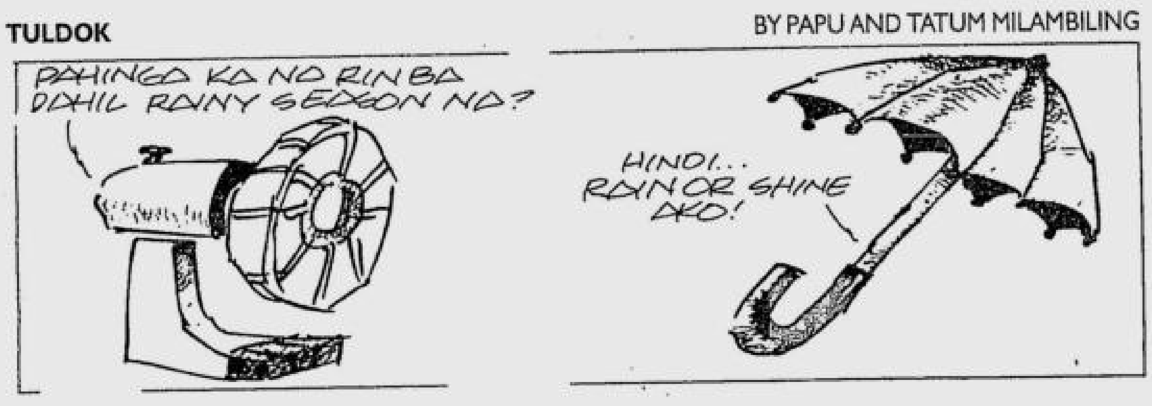
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


GUSTO KONG MAGTAYO NG N.G.O. NA NANGA-NGALAGA NG MGA CORAL REEFS AT FISH HABITATS.
..TAPOS MAY MGA SCUBA DIVING TRIPS DIN.....AY MUKHANG DI PALA 'YON UUBRA.
BAKIT, E DI MO PA NASIMULAN?
E BAGO AKO MAKA IPON PARA SA SARILI KONG SCUBA GEAR, BAKA UBOS NA ANG MGA ISDA AT KORALES 'NUN!

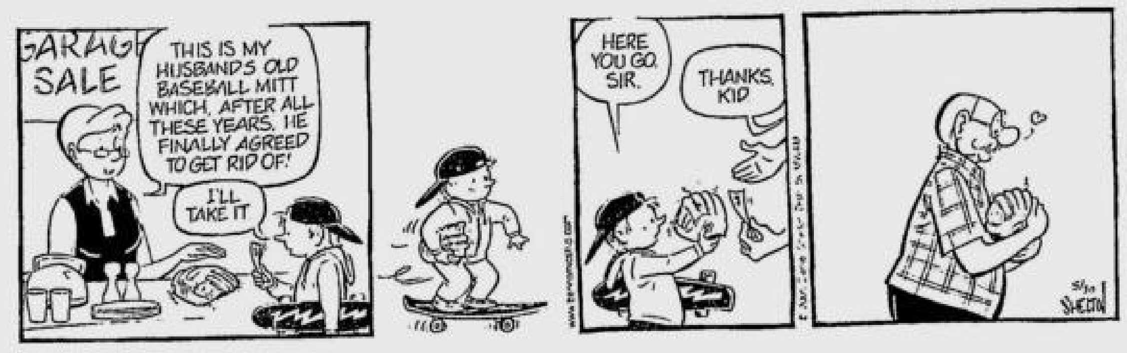
TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

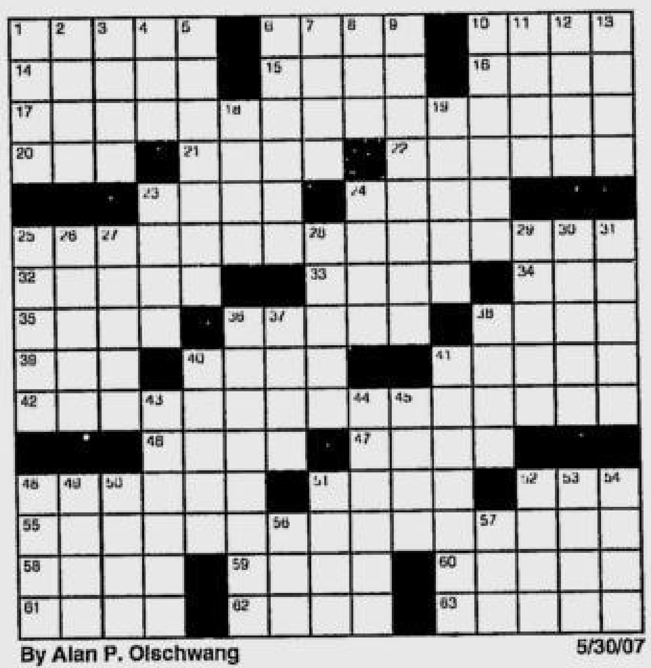

PAHINGA KA NA RIN BA DAHIL RAINY SEASON NA?
HINDI... RAIN OR SHINE AKO!

BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


GARAGE SALE
THIS IS MY HUSBAND'S OLD BASEBALL MITT WHICH, AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, HE FINALLY AGREED TO GET RID OF!
I'LL TAKE IT
HERE YOU GO, SIR.
THANKS, KID
5/30 SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Alan P. Olschwang
Huntington Beach, CA

ACROSS
1 Pedro's pop
6 "Pursuit of the Graf __"
10 Skip over
14 Flu type
15 British Conservative
16 Vegas rival
17 One Lee
20 Snaky curve
21 Part to play
22 Past and future
23 Become a father
24 Bjorn of tennis
25 Two Lees
32 Turner and Cantrell
33 Goes bad
34 Internet address
35 Old atlas initials
36 Broadway hit
38 Irish Rose's lover
39 Fr. holy woman
40 Pack away
41 Foreign
42 Two Lees
46 Cafe au __
47 Standing rules, for short
48 Steep slope
51 Farm tower
52 OSS successor
55 Three Lees
58 Racetrack ribbon
59 Wallach and Whitney
60 Sportscaster Jim
61 Assist a wrongdoer
62 Presley hit of 1958
63 Re-create blank tape

DOWN
1 Ashen
2 Yard sale caveat
3 Shovels
4 Fan's sound
5 Ways in
6 Purloined
7 Skin opening
8 Hesitant syllables
9 Upper canine
10 Citrus fruit
11 French seas
12 Regarding
13 Playthings
18 Lively circle dance
19 Kitchen seasonings
23 Reminder of an injury
24 Male sibs
25 Show embarrassment
26 Jamaican cultist
27 Family of Indy winners
28 Haggard
29 Harp on
30 Attempted
31 Actress Verdugo
36 Divested
37 Castle ringer
38 Pub pints
40 Chicago tower
41 WWI battle site
43 Celestial orbiter
44 Most arid
45 Actor Lugosi
48 Como __ Usted?
49 Use a stiletto
50 Cod or Fear
51 Anatomical covering
52 Biblical miracle site
53 Common bus. endings
54 1958 Pulitzer Prize winner
56 Worldwide worker's grp.
57 Patriotic org.

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

G	A	P		M	A	U	D	E		T	E	A	L	S
I	K	E		U	P	P	E	D		E	N	N	U	I
V	I	A		S	L	O	E	G	I	N	F	I	Z	Z
E	N	C	L		U	N	P	E	N		A	L	O	E
		H	O	R	S	E	S		L	I	N	E	N	S
A	L	F	I	E			E	V	E	N	T			
H	O	U	N	D		G	A	I	T	S		S	S	T
A	D	Z		S	D	I		C	S	T		U	T	E
S	E	Z		T	A	B	L	E		A	W	G	E	E
			P	A	Y	E	E			L	E	A	P	S
S	A	V	O	R	S		A	P	O	L	A	R		
A	L	A	S		P	E	R	E	Z		R	B	I	S
A	L	L	T	H	A	T	J	A	Z	Z		U	K	E
B	A	L	E	R		T	E	R	I	S		Z	E	E
S	H	I	R	E		A	T	S	E	A		Z	A	P

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5/30/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're extremely independent. You need your freedom, plus the constant stimulation of new activities and adventure. Your ability to make quick decisions and act with decisiveness often leaves others in your dust. You are forever youthful and exuberant. Many of you are skilled with your hands. Get ready for one of the most powerful years of your life. Dream big!
Birthdate of: Colm Meaney, actor; Wynonna Judd, singer; Gale Sayers, football Hall of Fame hero.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Someone might do a favor for you today, or give you a gift or offer you assistance of some kind. Be ready to accept this. (How else can others be generous?)

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Although today starts out with a bit of confusion, relations with partners and close friends are satisfying and rewarding later. Enjoy the company of others.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): After some initial confusion this morning, you'll find that co-workers are pleasantly cooperative today. You might see ways to make your workplace more attractive.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): This is a fun-loving, flirtatious day. You might feel attracted to someone. (And possibly vice versa!) Enjoy sports activities, the arts or playful times with children.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Entertain at home today. Purchases for your home or a family member could please you. Discussions with a female parent or relative might be significant.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Although you enjoy talking to others today, be careful about agreeing to anything important or signing contracts. Wait until Friday to pursue this kind of thing.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): This is not an ideal day to shop, although that is what you might want to do. Just think about what you want to buy, or check it out. But do the deal tomorrow (or later).

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You might feel a bit at loose ends today. Don't worry; many people feel this way today. There's definitely some tension building up before tomorrow's Full Moon

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Time spent alone or in solitude somehow will please you. You need to relax and get more rest. However, later in the day, you'll feel re-energized.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Enjoy fun times with friends and groups today. A new female acquaintance could enter your life. Perhaps this is someone who might help you make improvements at home.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You're full of creative ideas today, and others seem to notice. However, don't act on these ideas today. Wait until tomorrow or Friday.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Try to do something different that is out of your normal routine today. Go someplace you've never been before. Satisfy your desire to learn something new. You're curious about everything today.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

by Dave Green

								5
			3	9			2	4
		1			8		3	
	1	2	9			4		
4				7		5		
	6	9	8			2		7
	2		6			3		8
		5			2	7		1
						6	5	

Difficulty Level ★★★

5/30

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

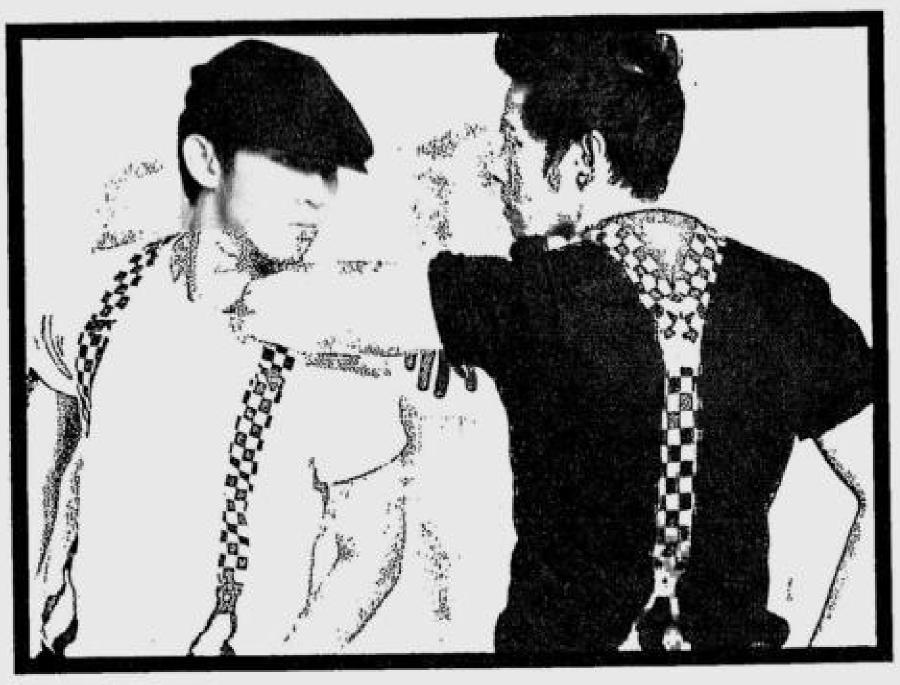
Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

5	6	4	8	3	9	2	7	1
3	2	7	1	6	4	5	9	8
8	9	1	2	7	5	4	6	3
2	7	3	5	4	1	6	8	9
4	1	8	9	2	6	3	5	7
9	5	6	3	8	7	1	2	4
7	4	5	6	9	3	8	1	2
6	3	2	7	1	8	9	4	5
1	8	9	4	5	2	7	3	6

Difficulty Level ★★

Rockin' Rico

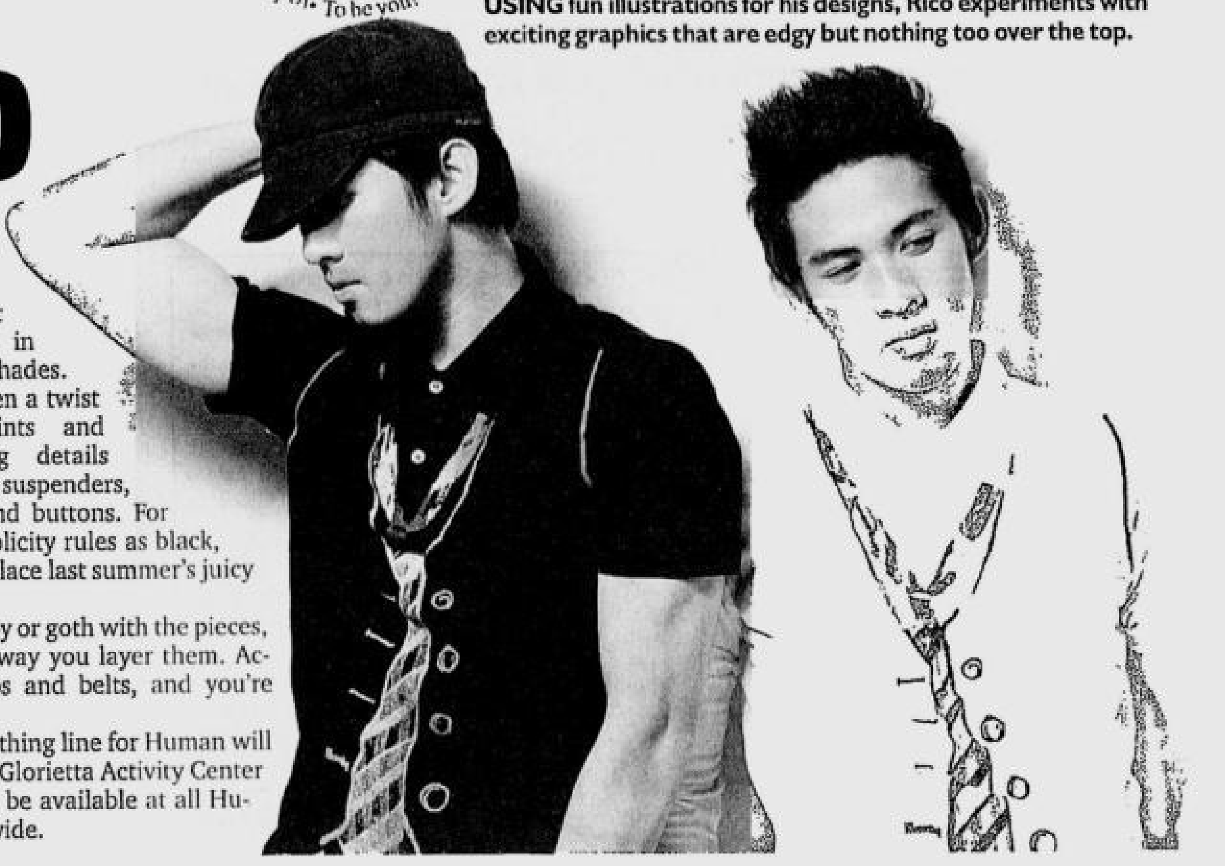


From page C1

The Rico Blanco collection consists mostly of simple but edgy pieces in monochromatic shades. Plain shirts are given a twist with graphic prints and drawn-on clothing details such as neckties, suspenders, collars, pockets, and buttons. For the collection, simplicity rules as black, white, and gray replace last summer's juicy colors.

You can go preppy or goth with the pieces, depending on the way you layer them. Accessorize with caps and belts, and you're good to go.

Rico Blanco's clothing line for Human will be launched at the Glorietta Activity Center on June 1 and will be available at all Human stores nationwide.



USING fun illustrations for his designs, Rico experiments with exciting graphics that are edgy but nothing too over the top.

BATH TIME is FUN TIME

If you are new to the baby-bathing scene, EQ Dry makes it easy for mommies to face this challenge and make it a happy routine for both baby and mommy.

First, line your baby wash, bath sponge, cloth towel, rubber toys beside your bath tub for easy access. Next, check if the water temperature is just right before letting baby in to the tub. For babies up to six months old, fill the bath tub with only up to five inches of water with his shoulders covered with warm water. For older babies, fill the bath no more than waist-high as a safety precaution. Finally, place your bath mat and slippers near the tub so babies don't slip when they get out of the water!

After undressing your baby, carefully place baby in the bath tub using one hand to support his neck and head. Use only a little amount of soap and wash him with the sponge from top to bottom and front to back. Use a wet, soapy cloth to clean his scalp and moistened cotton wool for his eyes and face. After soaping, rinse your baby thoroughly and wrap him in a towel or bath robe and pat him dry.

Bath time for babies is all about fun and play. Make this a part of baby's routine so that when he grows up, he'll appreciate the comforts of healthy hygiene. And with EQ Dry diaper, babies will surely look forward to bath time with their EQ Dry Bath Time Buddies!

Happy si baby, happy si mommy!

EQ Dry
BATH TIME Buddies
EQ Dry

Make bathing fun
for your baby,
get these bath time buddies
for FREE with
every purchase of EQ Dry!

FREE DELIVERY

PROMO MECHANICS:

1. You can join by simply collecting wrappers with intact points of ***EQ Dry Baby Diaper with colored cloth-like cover***. Points per packaging are as follows:

EQ DRY BABY DIAPER	LABEL POINTS
Mini Pack (S4, M4, L4, XL4)	1/4 pt
Travel Pack (NB22, S20, M18, L16, XL14)	1 pt
Econo Pack (S40, M36, L32, XL28)	2 pts
Jumbo Pack (S60, M54, L48, XL42)	3 pts
Mega Pack (M84, L72)	4 pts

2. You must collect the corresponding points to be able to get one (1) collectible item:

ITEM		POINTS
Bathroom Mat	Pig / Frog / Duck / Tiger	15 pts
Bath Robe	Pig / Frog / Duck / Tiger	12 pts
Bathroom Slippers	Pig / Frog / Duck / Tiger	8 pts
Bath Sponge	Pig / Frog / Duck / Tiger	6 pts

* Only entire wrappers with intact points of ***EQ Dry Baby Diaper with colored cloth-like cover*** will be accepted.
* Entries containing cut-out points will NOT be honored.
* Entries containing soiled wrappers (wrappers contaminated with feces or mud, discolored or faded wrappers) or unused wrappers will NOT be honored.

3. Submit the required ***EQ Dry Baby Diaper with colored cloth-like cover*** wrappers together with the complete information written on a piece of paper: sender's name, complete address, telephone and/or mobile phone numbers, baby's name and age, signature of parent/guardian plus the desired premium item/s enclosed in an envelope. *Please include landmarks for hard to find locations.*

4. Entries can be mailed or hand carried to:

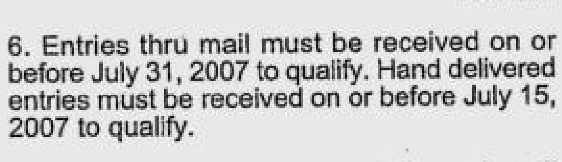
"EQ DRY Bath Time Buddies"
JS Unitrade Merchandise, Inc.
31st Floor Raffles Corporate Center,
Emerald Avenue, Ortigas Center,
Pasig City 1605

Or

"EQ DRY Bath Time Buddies"
P.O. Box 14280 Pasig City

5. The chosen premium item/s will be delivered FREE of charge by JRS Express to the address submitted by the sender. In the event that, the sender is not present during the time of delivery, a member of the sender's household may be asked to sign a proof of delivery and receive the premium item/s in behalf of the sender.

OTHER AVAILABLE DESIGNS:



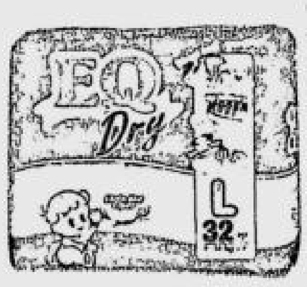
6. Entries thru mail must be received on or before July 31, 2007 to qualify. Hand delivered entries must be received on or before July 15, 2007 to qualify.

7. Premium items will be delivered until September 30, 2007.

8. You may join the promo as many times as you want.

9. Prizes are not convertible to cash.

PROMO PERIOD:
April 16 to July 15, 2007



Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1246, series of 2007.

Avon Naturals' new whitening skincare line is made specially for teens

Texas Roadhouse Grill's Juicy Ribeye Steak:
More Bang for your Buck

TEXAS ROADHOUSE GRILL, the first authentic Western Cowboy Saloon in Manila, now makes it a lot easier to give in to your hankering for steaks that are truly substantial and succulent. Its bestselling U.S. Ribeye Steak, hefty at 10 ounces, comes with a choice of two sidings (fresh veggies, mashed potato, steamed rice, French fries).

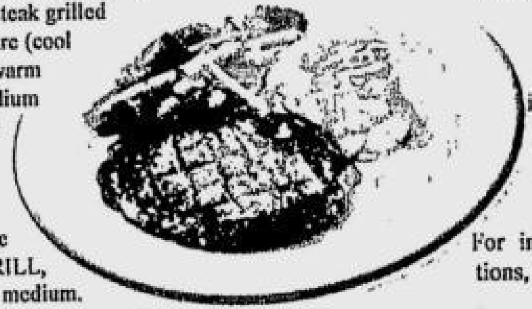
You can also have your steak grilled according to your liking: rare (cool red center), medium rare (warm red center, very juicy), medium (pink center), medium well (slightly pink center) and well done (cooked through and through).

For maximum succulence TEXAS ROADHOUSE GRILL, recommends steaks grilled medium.

You can also choose from among the restaurant's extensive steak menu and sample their generous portions of tender ribs and chops, ocean fresh seafood, soups, garden-fresh salads, the sinful Cowboy Chocolate Cake and their signature hand-shaken Silver Star Margarita.

Perfect for the entire family, TEXAS ROADHOUSE GRILL is located at Quadrant 1 of the new Bonifacio High Street, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig.

For inquiries or reservations, call 856-1547 to 48.



SHAINA poses with guests at the launch of Avon's latest skincare line.

The fairest of them all

Text by Bianca Consunji
2bU! Correspondent
Photos by Ryan Fernandez

NOW THAT SUMMER'S OVER and another academic year is on its way, it's time for students to get into their uniforms and go back to school.

However, the month of June also brings typhoons and scant sunshine, making summer's golden tans look a bit off-putting in the middle of such gloomy weather.

While we don't encourage bleaching your skin to a pasty white, starting a lightening skin regimen can help restore your natural skin color and help heal skin (since the prolonged sun exposure over the summer might have done some damage to your skin, especially if you forgot to apply sunscreen).

As most students cannot afford the pricey brightening lines usually found in the market, the budget-conscious would be glad to hear of Avon Naturals' new whitening skincare line made specially for teens.

The line, which boasts of four new products (cleanser, toner, moisturizer and day cream with SPF), lists bearberry plant and rosehip extracts as its active ingredients. The ingredients contain whitening components such as hydroquinone and vitamin C, which target dark spots and discolorations.

For those who would rather maintain their skin color and need to target other skin problems instead, there are two other variants for the Avon Naturals line: Replenishing and Purifying.

The replenishing line (which has a 3-in-1 milky cream cleanser, toner, moisturizer and cold cream) contains blue algae and bamboo extracts for moisturizing skin. The purifying line, on the other hand, lists grapefruit extract as its active ingredient. The line carries a cleanser, facial scrub and toner.

Teen actress Shaina Magdayao is Avon's latest endorser for the line. In a slumber party-themed launch at Bedspace Greenbelt 3, Magdayao shared tips on maintaining good skin.

"I always have to be under the sun when we're shooting on location, so I wear sunscreen all the time," she said. "And I make sure to remove all traces of makeup after tapings."

Magdayao, who is the latest Filipina endorser for the global brand, follows in the footsteps of Lea Salonga, Tweetie de Leon, Iza Calzado, and Angel Locsin.

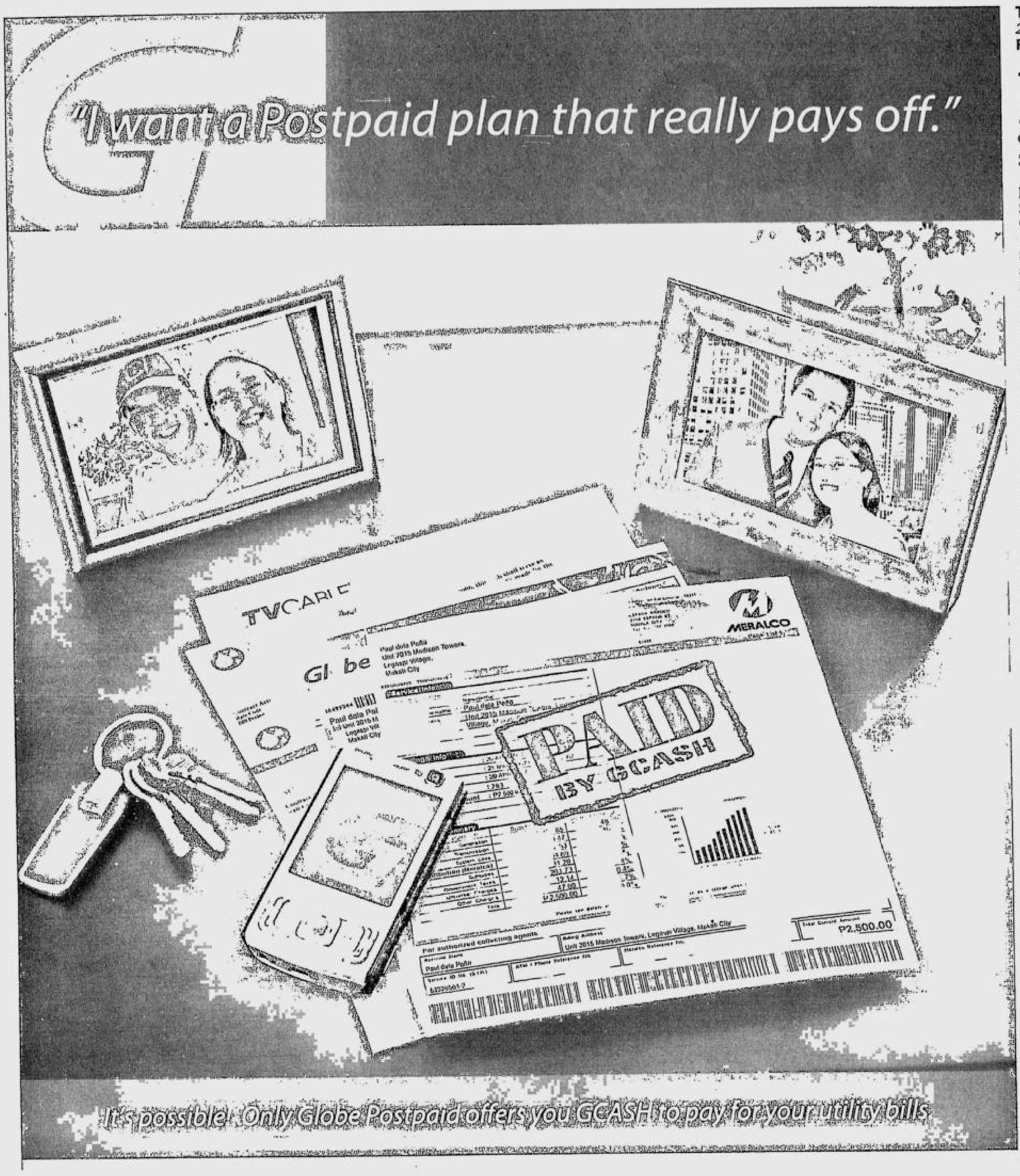
"I feel really lucky to introduce the line to other young girls like me," she said. "And to get mentioned alongside the other big stars? Wow!"

"I'm very happy to be part of the Avon family. And I feel very fortunate to be able to do what I love, and that I'm fulfilling some of my dreams as early as now."

Email the author at biancaconsunji@yahoo.com

AVON Naturals brand manager Grace Mendoza with new endorser, Shaina Magdayao

PARLOR games at the slumber party-themed event at Bedspace


"I want a Postpaid plan that really pays off."
TVCABLE
Globe
MERALCO
PAID BY GCASH
P2,800.00
It's possible! Only Globe Postpaid offers you GCASH to pay for your utility bills.

Get as much as P2500/month in GCASH to pay your electric, water, cable, Globe bill, and more.

FREE GCASH For 12 months
SUBSCRIBE TO
Plan 1800 or above

Not only do you get GCASH, you can also have a cooler summer when you get these multimedia phones

at 0% interest
for 18 months at PLAN 1800 or above

Nokia N95
P2,607/month
Superior internet browsing speeds of up to 1.4MBPS with the 1st HSDPA Nokia phone on Globe's Super 3G network.
The N95 also comes with a 5 Megapixel camera.

Nokia N73
P1,217/month

Nokia N70
P889/month

Offer extended until June 1, 2007! For more details, see flyers or go to the nearest Globe Hub and Business Center, call 751-8888 or visit www.hub-eshop.com and subscribe now.
To know more about where you can use GCASH, just go to the nearest Globe Business Center or call 2882 for FREE.
Approved by DTI-NCR. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1786, Series of 2007.

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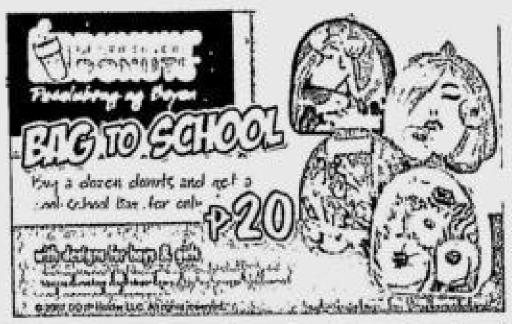
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BROOKLYN
Italian Salad

Bite into the Big Apple

By Pam Pastor

I AM NORMALLY ADVENTUROUS when it comes to food, but not when I am at TGIFriday's.

Blame it on my Cajun Chicken Fingers obsession. Every time my friends and I eat at TGIFriday's, I always order the same thing—Cajun Chicken Fingers, no honey mustard, no barbecue sauce, just mayo and a strawberry iced tea. When I am extra-hungry or when I have someone to share with, I also get a plate of mozzarella sticks.

But Friday's Taste of New York offerings are messing with what has become my Friday's tradition for years now. Because these new dishes are just dying to be ordered.

TGIFriday's pays tribute to its hometown New York, considered "a melting pot of neighborhoods and flavors," by whipping up new palate pleasers to be served in Friday's restaurants all over the world.

Friday's corporate chef Melody Sto. Domingo said, "We really want to highlight New York, and we will be doing so until the end of June."

Four new mouth-watering dishes, one special drink and one yummy dessert will take diners on a taste tour of Little Italy, Wall Street, Chinatown and Brooklyn.

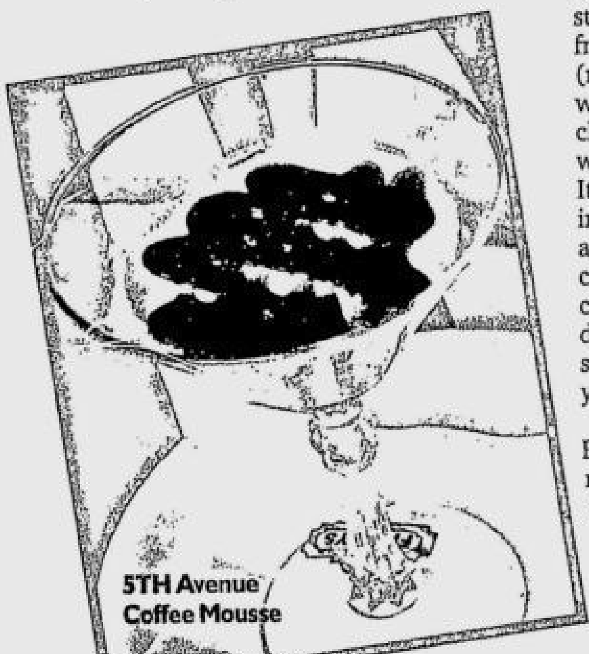
Everyone has a New York dream: to stand in the middle of Times Square and be mesmerized by the sounds and the lights, to watch the Knicks in action, or to pretend to be Carrie and relive your favorite "Sex and the City" moment. But some New York dreams will take a while (and a lot of cash) before turning into reality.

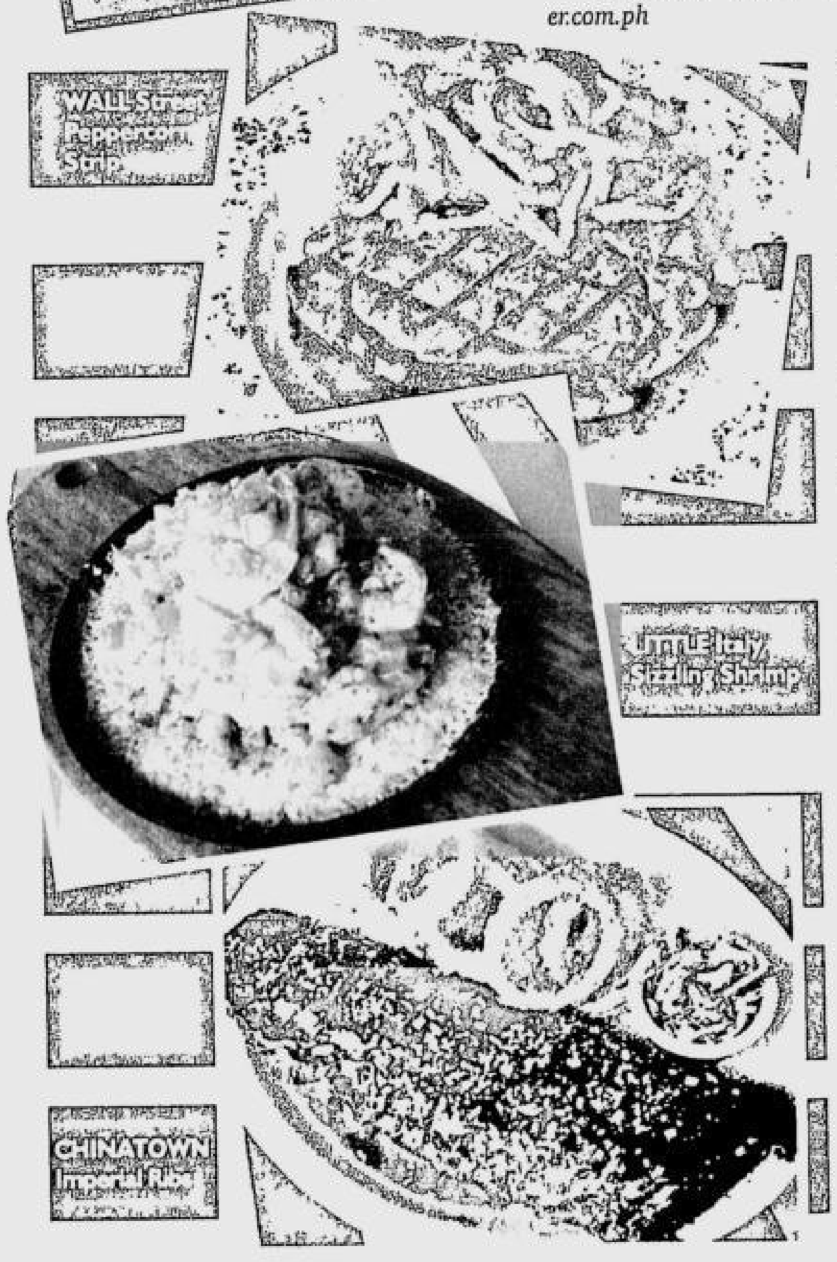
Until then, let the Wall Street Peppercorn Strip (tender strip steak generously seasoned with cracked peppercorns, then seared to perfection and topped with frizzled Cajun onions, served with a rich demi-glace and cheddar cheese mashed potatoes); the Brooklyn Italian Salad (romaine lettuce tossed with garlic ciabatta croutons, bruschetta mix and balsamic vinaigrette, topped with grilled steak, balsamic glaze, Parmesan cheese and fresh basil); the Chinatown Imperial Ribs (marinated baby back ribs, grilled and basted with sweet hoisin sauce, sprinkled with dried chili pepper flakes and green onions, served with Cajun onion rings Asian slaw); the Little Italy Sizzling Shrimp (plump shrimps sautéed in our tangy bruschetta marinara, served hot atop savory rice with melted Monterey Jack cheese); the 5th Avenue Coffee Mousse (rich creamy coffee-flavored mousse drizzled with decadent hot fudge and sweet caramel sauce), and the Cosmopolitan take you and your taste buds there.

Every order of Wall Street Peppercorn Strip, Brooklyn Italian Beef Salad, Chinatown Imperial Ribs and Little Italy Sizzling Shrimp Marinara will earn you a P250 gift certificate.

Visit TGIFriday's at Glorietta 3, Alabang Town Center, Tomas Morato, Robinsons Place Manila and Robinsons Galleria.

E-mail the author at ppastor@inquirer.com.ph





TGIFriday's' Taste of New York offerings take you on a tour from Little Italy and Wall Street to Chinatown and Brooklyn

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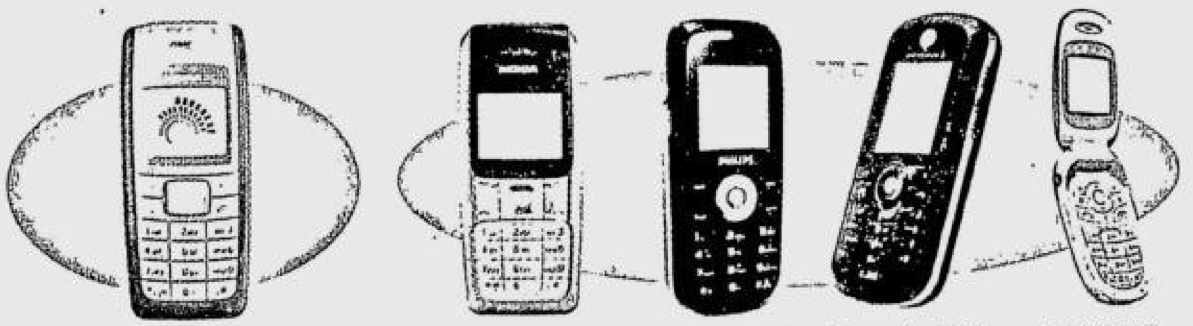

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1 Humans are diphyodont, meaning that they develop two sets of teeth. The first set (the "baby," "milk," "primary" or "deciduous" set) normally starts to appear at about six months of age, although some babies are born with one or more visible teeth, known as neonatal teeth. Normal tooth eruption at about six months is known as teething and can be quite painful for an infant.

2 We have 20 primary teeth and 32 permanent teeth.

3 Plaque is a biofilm consisting of large amounts of various bacteria which forms on teeth. If not removed regularly, plaque buildup can lead to dental cavities (caries) or periodontal problems such as gingivitis.

4 Tooth decay is also known as dental caries, an infectious disease which damages the structures of teeth and leading to pain, tooth loss, infection, and, in severe cases, death. Dental caries was already present in the Bronze, Iron, and Medieval ages but also prior to the neolithic period. The largest increases in the prevalence of caries have been associated with diet changes. Today, it remains one of the most common diseases throughout the world.

5 Tooth decay is caused by certain types of acid-producing bacteria which cause damage in the presence of fermentable carbohydrates such as sucrose, fructose, and glucose.

6 A tooth (which is primarily mineral in content) is in a constant state of back-and-forth demineralization and remineralization between the tooth and surrounding saliva. When the pH at the surface of the tooth drops below 5.5, demineralization proceeds faster than remineralization, resulting in the ensuing decay.

7 There is no known method to regenerate large amounts of tooth structure. Instead, dental health organizations advocate preventative and prophylactic measures, such as regular oral hygiene and dietary modifications, to avoid dental caries.

8 An estimated 90 percent of schoolchildren worldwide and most adults have experienced caries, with the disease being most prevalent in Asian and Latin American countries and least prevalent in African countries.

9 In the United States, dental caries is the most common chronic childhood disease, being at least five times more common than asthma.

10 The use of tobacco may increase the risk for caries formation. Smokeless tobacco frequently contains high sugar content in some brands, possibly increasing the susceptibility to caries. Tobacco use is a significant risk factor for periodontal disease, which can allow the gingiva to recede.

11 It has been found th and certain kinds of ch cheddar can help count decay if eaten soon a consumption of foods p ly harmful to teeth. Als ing gum containing (wood sugar) is widely protect teeth in some c being especially popula Finnish candy industry.

12 A toothbrush is abl move most plaque, excep eas between teeth. As flossing is also consider cessity to maintain oral When used correctly, floss removes plaque f tween teeth and at the g where periodontal dise begins and could develo

13 Electric toothbrushes considered more effect

for teeth's sak

Chronic gum disease linked to tongue

IN A SMALL STUDY, THE GUM DISEASE periodontitis was associated with an elevated risk of developing tongue cancer.

Dr. Mine Terzal, from the University at Buffalo School of Dental Medicine in New York, and colleagues compared 51 white men with newly diagnosed cancer of the tongue to 54 cancer-free "controls" who were seen during the same period.

The study excluded people younger than 21 years and those who lacked teeth, had any previous malignancy, and those with an impaired immune system.

Periodontitis leads to bone loss around affected teeth, and the investigators used bone loss seen on X-rays to assess periodontitis. They report, in the Archives of Otolaryngology--Head and Neck Surgery, that each millimeter reduction in bone was associated with a 5-fold rise in the risk of tongue cancer.

"Periodontitis is a chronic disease th gresses very slowly," Dr. Terzal noted. " alveolar bone loss on X-rays indicates fection has existed for decades, ma clear that periodontitis preceded the

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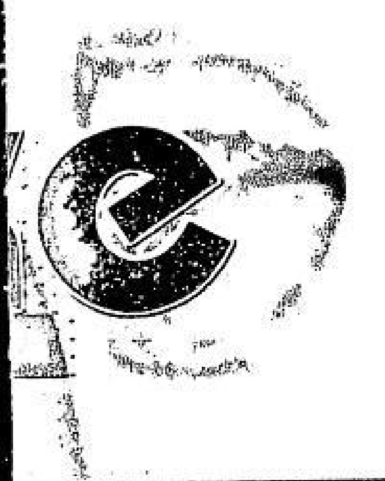
manual brushes for most people. The most important advantage of electric toothbrushes is their ability to aid people with dexterity difficulties, such as those associated with rheumatoid arthritis.

Chew on this: 15 fast facts about teeth

14 Fluoride therapy is often recommended to protect against dental caries. Water fluoridation and fluoride supplements decrease the incidence of dental caries. Fluoride helps prevent dental decay by binding to the hydroxyapatite crystals in enamel. The incorporated fluoride makes enamel more resistant to demineralization and thus more resistant to decay.

15 Topical fluoride, such as a fluoride toothpaste or mouthwash, is also recommended to protect teeth surfaces. Many dentists include application of topical fluoride solutions as part of routine cleanings.



e cancer

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diagnosis, and not vice-versa." The team concludes that larger studies are needed to confirm these findings, and to tease out the effect of tobacco use on the risk of periodontal disease and tongue cancer. *Reuters*

Astring-O-sol pecialist supports PSO-HNS confab

RING-O-SOL SPECIALIST RECENTLY LENT ITS FULL port to the Philippine Society of Otolaryngology-Head neck Surgery's (PSO-HNS) 50th anniversary celebra- . In its annual convention held Nov. 29 to Dec. 2 at the Shangri-La Hotel, world-class otolaryngologists, sur- s and ENT (ear, nose and throat) doctors from all over country gathered together in an opportunity for further ning and exchange of ideas in their respective fields.

r. Natividad Almazan-Aguilar, president of PSO- , shared that most of the participating doctors spe- ze in such illnesses as sore throats, which are expect- be prevalent with the onset of the cold season and rainy season.

ccording to Almazan-Aguilar, a sore throat is not ething to be taken lightly. Sore throat can be caused iruses or bacteria that infect the throat; or it can be ed by allergies, pollution, or even cold, dry air. A throat can be due to streptococcus infection. Some- s, it can be the first sign of another illness, like flu, or cough. A sore throat usually heals in about one k, but some complications which may arise include development of a secondary infection in the middle or sinuses. In very rare cases, a throat abscess could r, or other diseases like rheumatic fever or kidney ase.

lmazan-Aguilar recommended devoting extra care our throats. "To soothe the irritation and promote r healing, gargle with an antiseptic mouthwash that relieve the inflammation while it kills the bacteria ch cause sore throat," she suggested. "As much as ible, choose an oral antiseptic that works fast and ks up to 24 hours, so that you'll have longer protec- and you will not be bothered while doing chores at e or at work."

he also discussed the importance of Chlorhexidine, gold standard in oral hygiene, which is found to have rior antibacterial and anti-fungal action in sore at, muscositis, and halitosis (or bad breath). lorhexidine oral mouthwash, based on research, was d to be superior versus other oral antiseptics," she es. "It is safe and well-tolerated even for daily use."

string-O-sol Specialist contains 0.06-percent rhexidine. It targets, kills sore throat-causing germs, shields the throat for up to 24 hours. It is the superior apeutic solution trusted by experts and voice profes- als.

he PSO-HNS is a nationally recognized association of fied specialists of otolaryngology-head and neck ery.

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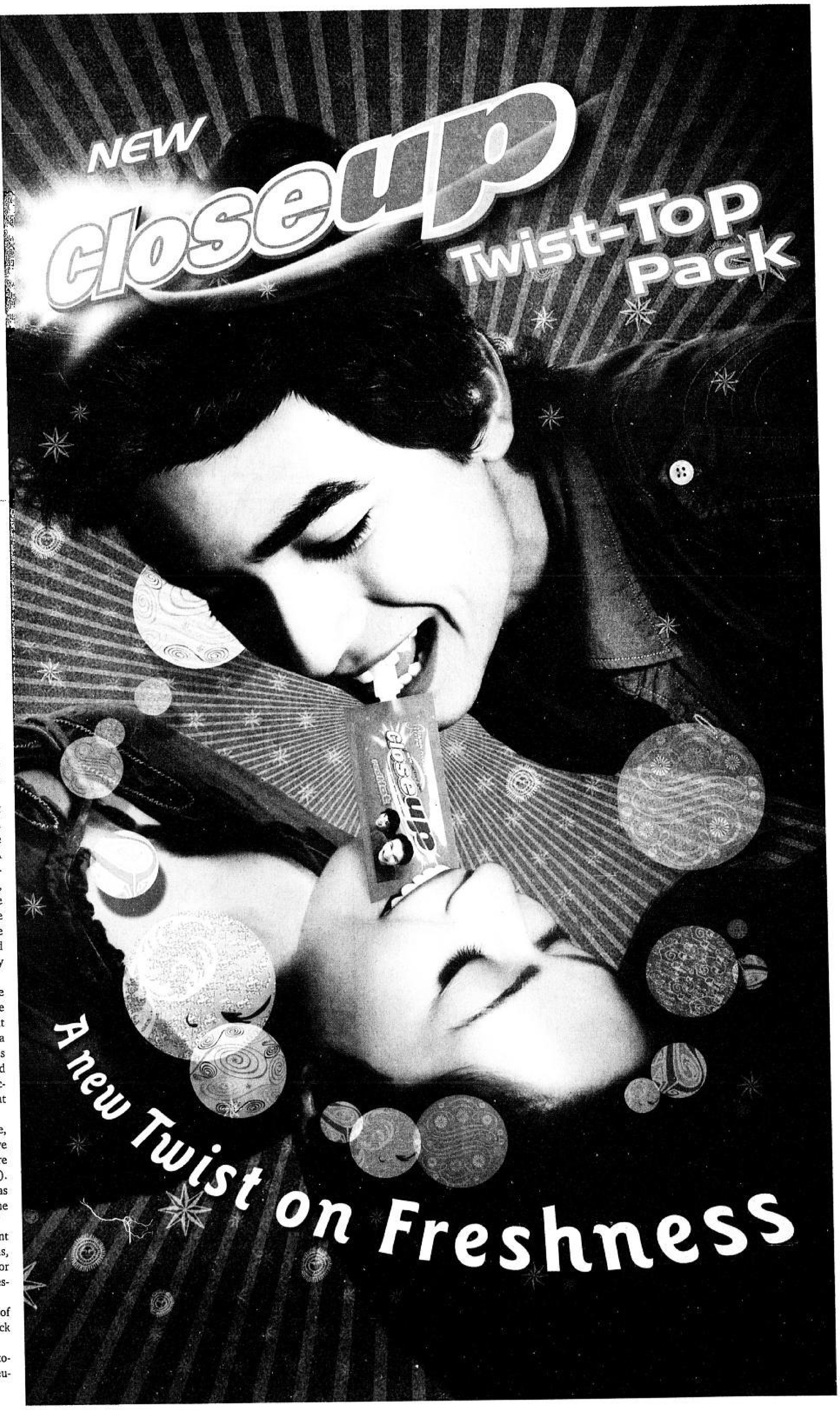

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Jordin Sparks is American Idol 2007

JORDIN Sparks

IN THE END, IT ALL CAME down to the pure singing ability and teen-friendly image of Jordin Sparks, American Idol 2007.

As much as we all loved Blake Lewis' hip demeanor, Simon was right: Jordin and her big vocal pipes wiped the floor with her contender, giving heartfelt renditions of Christina Aguilera's "Fighter," Martina McBride's "Broken Wing" and this year's Idol song, "This is My Now."

The Jordin vs Blake showdown will be most remembered for being a battle between a great singer and a great entertainer, and indeed, "American Idol" remains a singing contest. But don't worry, Blake, you'll always be one of the most original "Idol" contestants in our book.

Congratulations, Irwin, Nessa and Ric! For your entries to the Star World-2bU! U B the Judge promo, you all win special premium prizes from Star World and "American Idol"! To claim your prize, call 8937472 to 73.

Here's what they said about the finale performances:

Irwin Pena: Randy Jackson's "American Idol is about singing" truly applied to Jordin Sparks. In the first round, her version of "Fighter" was better than Blake Lewis' "You Give Love a Bad Name." She cleanly hit every note while Lewis had some off-keys because of constantly moving. He showed off his beatboxing ability but it wasn't good enough.

Contrary to Simon Cowell's remarks, the first round, for me, went to Sparks. The second and third rounds went to her, too. The third song, "This Is My Now," was not the kind of song that fit Lewis' vocal ability. Sparks, meanwhile, turned it into a very soulful and emotional performance, making everyone see that she deserved the title. Jordin indeed sparkled that night.

Nessa Mae Espineli: This finale has been the most contemporary season in "AI," thanks to Blake Lewis' cool style and Jordin Sparks' young, bubbly personality. Simon Cowell was right when he said that Blake was the better entertainer and Jordin the better singer.

Her rendition of Christina Aguilera's "Fighter" really suited her powerful voice, and her "Broken Wing" gave me goose bumps.

Blake did well by choosing to sing "You Give Love A Bad Name" again, although his rendition of "She Will Be Loved" was a bit weak. Both finalists sang "This is My Now," but the song was really not suited for Blake. The guy is really talented, though, and even if he didn't win, no doubt he'd have a place in the music industry.

Ric Fernando Jr.: Blake, in his usual hip and unique singing form, again took on Bon Jovi, which is on top of my list of favorite "Idol" performances ever. Jordin proved why she was a better choice. Her vocals were fantastic and the songs she chose showcased her range and style. I found the finale song to be a bit unfair to Blake because it was too mellow for him and his style.

We all have to say goodbye to our favorite talent show for the meantime. What an exciting season, and we're missing "AI" already! See you all next year on Star World for "American Idol 2008"!

Win a Handyman shopping spree for your dad

DO YOU HAVE A "HANDYDADDY"? IS YOUR DAD A tooltime kind of guy? Is he a sucker for home improvement projects? Tell us about your handydaddy in 500 words. Send us a photo of him and something that he made—a chair, a bookcase, anything that he worked on with his hands. Then tell us, in 500 words or less, what makes your dad a handydaddy.

INQUIRER Lifestyle will pick the best four handydaddies and we'll take them shopping at Handyman where they will receive P20,000 worth of DIY purchases of their choice. Don't forget to include your name, age, your dad's name and age, your address and contact info. E-mail entries to dad@inquirer.com.ph. Deadline for entries is June 8.

Get a nostalgia fix with Mark Bautista

ARE YOU IN SEARCH OF A nostalgia fix? Fans of '80s music shouldn't miss Mark Bautista's concert "ReMARKable," which is presented by Le Froge. The concert, which will be held at 8 p.m., May 31, at Club O on the ground floor of the ABS-CBN Compound in Mother Ignacia, will also feature the official launch of Mark's third album, "Every Now and Then." It includes remakes of Mark's favorite '80s songs such as "Break It To Me Gently," "Got to Let You Know," "Kasalanan Ko Ba?" and the title track, "Every Now and Then."

The concert's special guests include Rachelle Ann Go and Yeng Constantino.

Entrance fee is P350 with a free drink. "ReMARKable" is sponsored by Viva Records, Belo Medical Group, PCSO, RMT Freight Services, Canada Immigration, Gold's Gym, Essensuals Toni and Guy and 90.7 Love Radio.

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Ms. Toni Gonzaga, celebrity endorser of Leone Stylus Pens, delighted Back-to-School shoppers during her recent appearances in Supplies Station SM North Edsa, National Bookstore Superbranch, and National Bookstore Glorietta. Catch her LIVE at selected National Bookstore and SM Supplies Station outlets until June 10, and see for yourself how Toni's found her Mr. Write with Leone Stylus Pens.

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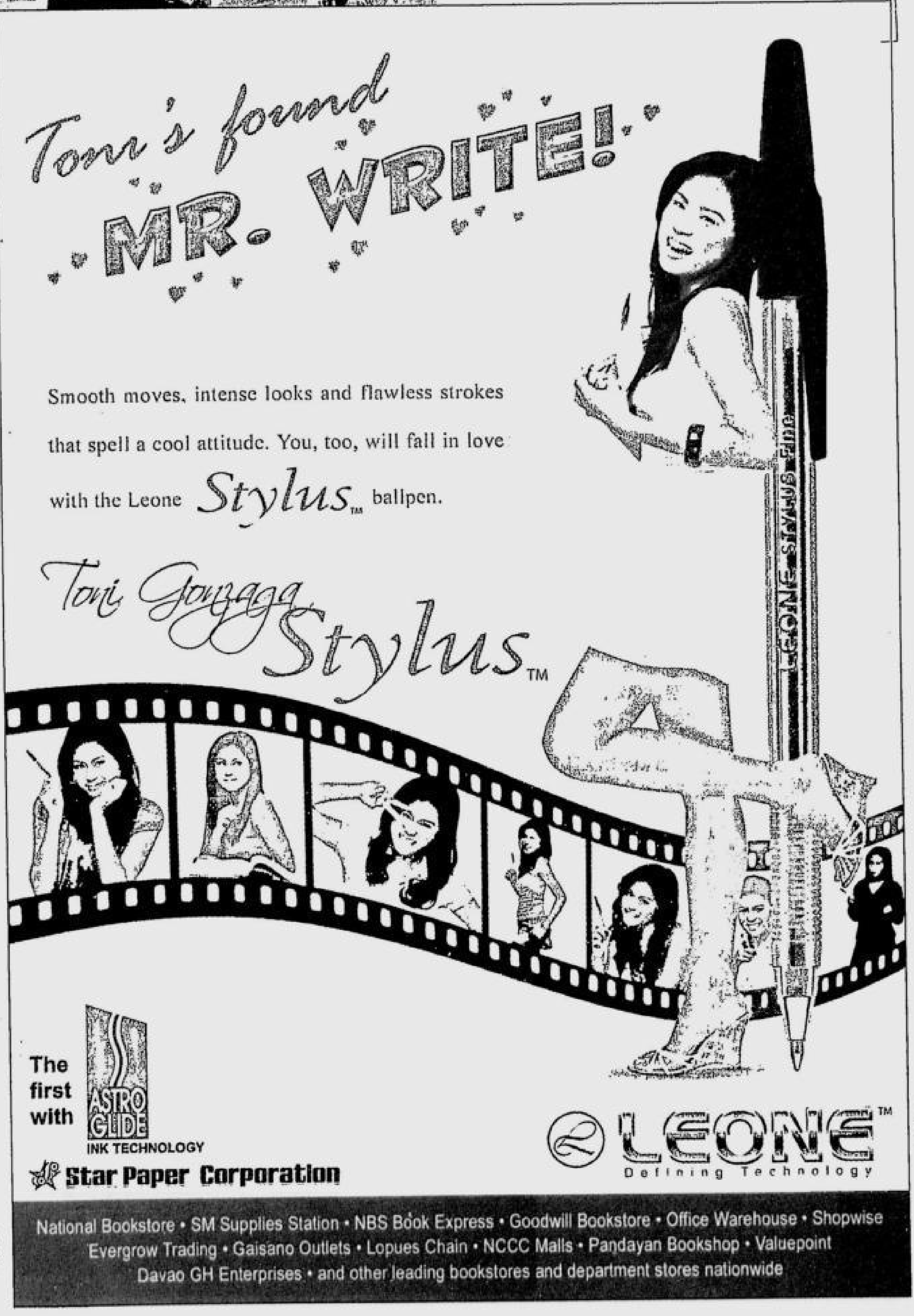

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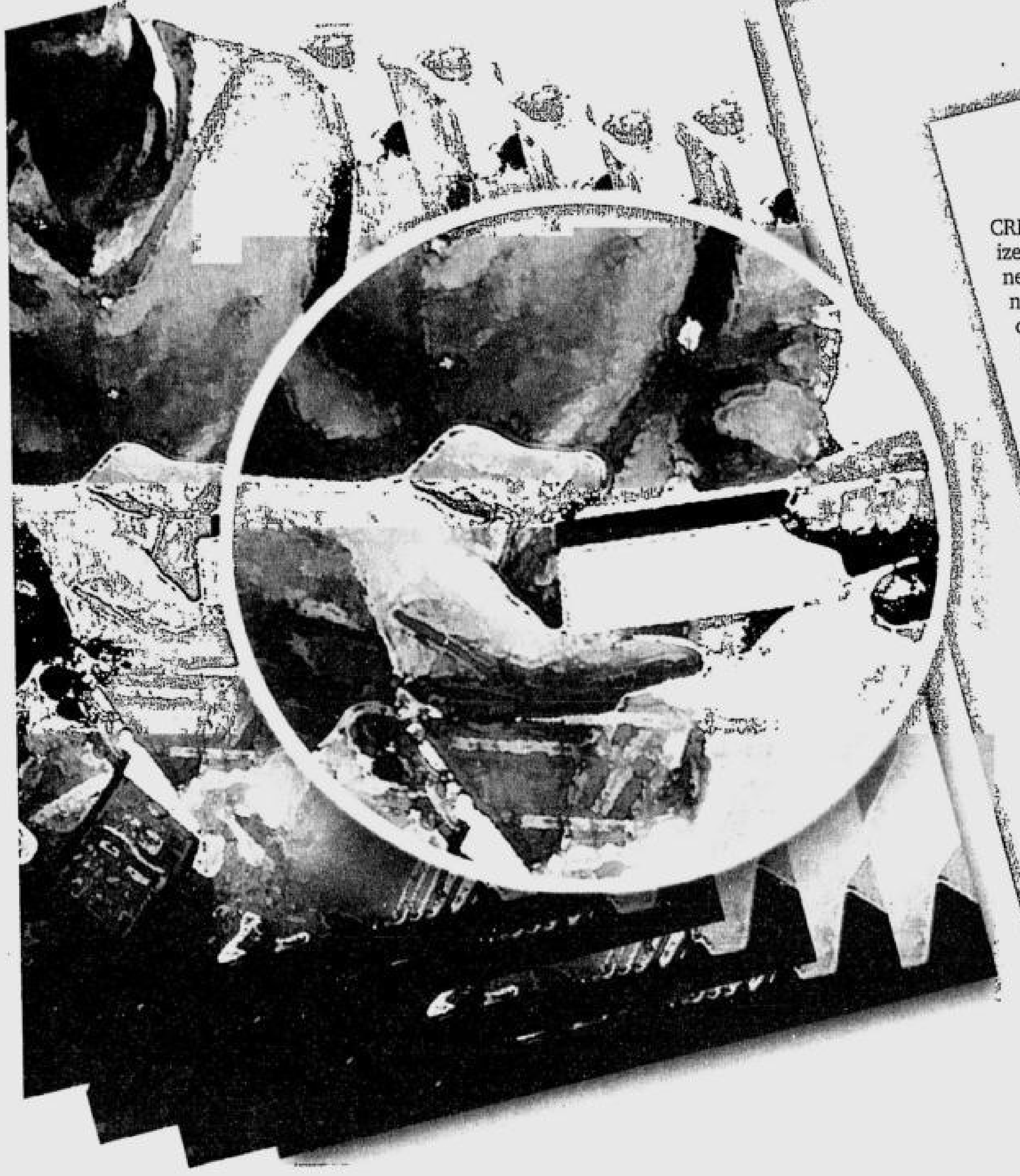

Making the most out of your credit card

CREDIT CARDS HAVE REVOLUTIONized the way Filipinos shop. Buying necessities and stuff with convenience, upgrading lifestyles or living conditions, and even securing the future (insurance and education loan can be availed via credit card), are just some of the values we get from the credit card.

A means for convenience, credit cards are now being accepted as a tool for payment rather than as an easy source of borrowing. People who own credit cards are becoming more responsible with credit card use and they see the plastic as something that will make life easier rather than make them fall into a debt trap.

To become a responsible credit card holder, here are things that will make you get the most of out of credit cards.

Know fully the credit terms of your credit card agreement by talking to a credit card officer. And don't forget to read the fine print of the credit card agreement and application form before you even apply for a credit card

Before you even contemplate about owning or getting a credit card, it is always advisable to ask first the bank or credit card issuer about its credit card products. Know about the credit limit, credit charges, membership fees, finance charges, late charges, cut-off dates, due dates, how you will pay them, can it be used as a discount card, does it have promotions or rewards or rebates, etc.

It is always best to compare credit card products not only by one card issuer but by other banks as well. With comparison, you will discover more about which banks offers the product that best suits your needs.

Always read the fine print of the credit card agreement or application before you affix your signature to these papers. The whole gamut of legal information about the credit card is written there and once you sign your signature you are legally bound by the terms of the bank.

Always set a portion of your take-home pay for emergencies.

Remember the story about the ant who saved for the rainy day? No need to elaborate on this one. Just always practice setting aside a percentage of your take-home pay to savings. Worry and headaches will be kept at bay if you know you have a little security in terms of savings in the bank.

Set a monthly budget for charges or spending and abide by it.

Most of us, particularly the women, are the weekend or monthly grocers. Limit your purchase to the budget of spending you've set aside for that particular week or month. So when payday comes, you can pay your credit in full for that spending.

Shop with your credit card like you are shopping using your disposable cash.

Nothing compares to the good feeling brought by window shopping and feasting your eyes on everything that's beautiful in the mall. You come across a nice little pink dress on sale that seems to say "buy me now or tomorrow I won't be here" constantly. Well, don't give in to the hypnotism usually happening during mall sales or you'd end up coming home with a truckload of items you don't have any use for and will eventually clutter your attic. Be a sensible shopper. Think before you buy. Do I really need this item?

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Making the most out of your credit card

From page E1

Keep a manageable number of monthly credit payments that you can afford to pay promptly.

So you have several credit cards. You have the red, silver, the blue and the green and even that gold. Cool. And you're using them all. One credit card for this item and another card for that item. That's uncool. It will cause too much headache when all these credit cards send you notices demanding payment almost at the same time. When using your cards, be always guided by the fixed spending budget you have for the month, and you won't go wrong.

To avoid penalties and to keep finance charges low, always make it a point to pay credit card bills promptly.

The best advice for you not to fall into the debt trap or cycle is to always pay your bills promptly and in full if you can. If you cannot pay in full, pay a significant large percentage of the amount so that finance charges would be kept at the minimum always. With this practice, you maintain a healthy credit background, meaning your credit standing is always good and banks and other credit institutions will love you.

If you are the type who uses a credit card for day to day expenditures, make sure you pay down enough monthly to keep your debt from ballooning.

Even if you are the type who charges every expense you have on a day-to-day basis, keep in mind a budget so that your expenses, however often they happen in a day, won't balloon. Keep track of your purchases and always have the total at the end of the day. Keep them posted on your ref so you will always be reminded of them.

Credit card information (including phone number of issuer) is best kept in a safe place in case your cards are lost or stolen.

There's this classic story of an employee who lost his ATM card including the PIN number that went conveniently with the ATM card. He often brings the PIN number written in a piece of paper along with the ATM card because he has a hard time remembering the codes. Well, I guess you know the rest of the story of how this guy became poorer. A little common sense always makes sense in taking care of our cards. They're the most valuable items in our wallet and it's always best to keep information about them tucked in a safe place not even people close to us will know.

Don't' throw away credit card sales slips. When bills arrive, compare the list of items written on them to the sales slips. If you find discrepancies, call your credit card company right away.

This advice is of the optimum necessity for you to be able to find out if in fact you did or did not make a certain purchase. Always keep the receipts and charge sales slips and always compare these proofs of purchase with the items written on the credit card bill.

Equitable Card Network launches the 'people's card'

EQUITABLE CARD NETWORK (ECN) - one of the country's leading credit card service providers and the largest in the merchant acquiring business-reaches out to a broader market segment with the launch of Equitable JCB 4-Gives.

Originally launched in 2004 as JCB Easy Pay, ECN has rebranded, repackaged and enhanced the card while retaining the brand's core strengths and functions. ECN focuses on the untapped market niche of entry-level and rank-and-file employees, a market that comprises more than half of the working class populace and deemed as "uncardable" by other credit card companies.

"The brand is strongly positioned for the mass market. With the advent of JCB 4-Gives, the common Filipino can now enjoy the benefits and perks of owning a credit card," says Anna Marie Cruz, VP for marketing and product development. "The product is also hinged on the uniquely Filipino practice of 'hulugan' payments, the trait of a practical Pinoy," she adds.

The most inherent core strength of the brand is the easy payment scheme. Credit card purchases are automatically divided into four payments spread out in two months at just 1.5-percent interest per payment. Cardholders also benefit from a low annual fee of P300 also payable in four installments, no membership fees, a minimum income requirement of just P7,500, and a minimum credit limit starting at P3,000. Cardholders receive their monthly statement via SMS or text messaging-no more late or missing statements! And since it's issued by ECN, cardholders enjoy worldwide acceptance, a wide payment network, and 24-hour Equitable Hello Customer Service.

Cruz sums it up, "ECN is breaking ground with a 'masa' card but we just want to give what customers need, especially in this day and age."

For inquiries or to apply for an Equitable JCB 4-Gives credit card, call 867-7977, toll free at 1-800-1888-3264 or visit any Equitable-PCI branch nationwide.

G3 OPENS BRANCHES AT SM MEGAMALL AND THE BLOCK
G3 (read as 'G Cube') opens its first two branches at SM Megamall Building and at The Block of SM North Edsa, with guests, best friends and TV hosts Mariel Rodriguez and Bianca Gonzalez. G3's flagship brand GStar is a new line of funky, hip shoes for young women on the go. It also features the GBX shoe collection for men. GStar is also available at GBX Boutiques, Robinsons Department Stores, Cinderella, Crossing's, and at Schuh Centre Greenhills.

Classy and comfortable dining experience in a 'wet market'

SM Hypermarket's Taste Asia upgrades the 'dampa' dining concept by giving shoppers not only wonderful tasting cuisines, but air conditioned eating area, clean and dry surroundings and open kitchens

By Raquel P. Gomez

ONE EATING DESTINATION AT THE Mall of Asia in Pasay City has been attracting crowds like a wet market round your corner. Al fresco, fresh seafood stalls, fruit and fresh produce stalls, coconut corner, *carinderia*-style eateries—the components of a fresh wet market plus a huge air conditioned eating area comprise Taste Asia, the newest addition to SM Hypermarket Fresh and Frozen Division in the north wing of the MOA.

Taste Asia is basically based on the popular *dampa* dining concept, where fresh seafood sellers and eateries in a public market merge their service to offer a unique dining experience to shoppers—you buy fresh seafood and have the eatery cook it for a fee.

At Taste Asia, the concept of *dampa* dining is upgraded by giving the shoppers convenience, comfort, and classy, clean, and dry surroundings—unlike, of course, in a wet market, according to Arnold Daluz of SM Hypermarket fresh and frozen division.

For similar fresh seafood prices and cooking fee found in most *dampa* destinations, Taste Asia has an air conditioned dining area that can seat 150 people and can also serve as function rooms. There are flat screen TVs and diners can even enjoy a karaoke session after enjoying their meals. For diners who want to eat *al fresco*, there's also a huge eating area ideal for dinners under the moonlit sky.

At the fresh seafood stalls, fresh catch and live ones in the aquarium abound. Pick your food fancy—*lapu lapu*, *pampano*, *mayamaya*, *dalagang bukid*, *tanigue*, tuna belly, live lobsters, live and jumping *suaje* (shrimps), live *hito*, red crabs, lobsters, clams, oysters, mussels, big squid and even *palaka* (edible frogs).

Daluz says the eateries, where you can have your dish cooked, are experts on food specialties. Wok with Liu offers authentic Chinese cuisine and its bestsellers include tempura prawns cooked in butter garlic and chili sauce, sweet and sour pork, spare ribs and salt and pepper and fish fillet cooked sweet and sour style.

Aling Naty's offers authentic Pampanga cuisine. The restaurant that became famous in a railroad crossing in Angeles, Pampanga, can whip up dishes such as *sisig*, *inihaw na pusit*, *inihaw na liempo*, chicken *barbecue*, *and* nilasing na hipon.

Taste palates craving for Ilonggo dishes can opt for Minettes which offers calamares, chicken inasal, stuffed pusit and Bicol pancit.

A unique feature of the eateries is the presence of the open kitchens. This is to assure customers that food preparation is clean and the food items brought in the eateries are honestly prepared to the last gram.

More eateries will be opened in the future as Taste Asia is envisioned to offer Asian cuisine. "Anything that you wanted to be cooked in terms of seafood, meat or poultry bought in the fresh and frozen division, you can have it cooked here. You can choose Filipino, Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Thailand, and other Asian specialties," says Daluz.

"Taste Asia concept is really to eat after shopping, or to have your dinner cooked and bring the cooked food home," says Daluz. "This saves money and time particularly for people working in the offices. They can go here before they go home in the suburbs."

Taste Asia can accommodate late and early diners as it is open from 10 a.m. till 12 p.m. Since it's located in the biggest mall, parking space is definitely ample.

Open for almost a year, Taste Asia has been attracting crowds unabatedly. Because of its success, Taste Asia opened another of its kind in SM Hypermarket in Pasig City. "This is a service that we like to offer to our customers after they've shopped in the Hypermarket, because Filipinos love to eat after shopping," says Daluz.

Strengthening family ties with Orocan

THERE'S NOTHING AS MOVING as a good mother-daughter relationship. An environment where mutual exchange of respect, love and admiration exist between mothers and daughters is very vital to raising beautiful, life-smart daughters.

At home, quality time spent with each other can also provide the perfect venue for your daughter to learn about the ABC's of life. Caha de Oro Image Dresser with Drawers which amazingly combines the features of a vanity mirror, compartment and drawers in one compact unit can help you achieve just that.

As your daughter is growing up, teach her the importance of being clean and organized with the Image Dresser. The Image Dresser's large vanity compartment can hold a wide array of accessories and other personal paraphernalia. This feature will allow you to share drawer space with your daughter leading to more opportunities for bonding.

With the Image Dresser's compartment designed to make everything accessible in plain view and a heightened sense or orderliness, your daughter can easily locate and pick the item that she wants. The Image Dresser carries a flip open vanity mirror that can be tilted up or down.

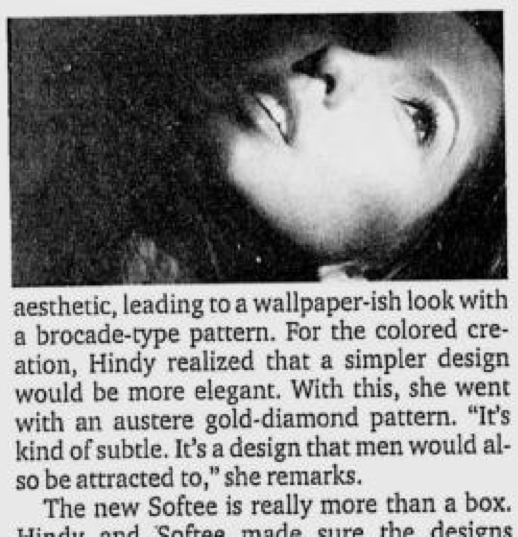
In storing valuables like pieces of jewelry and important documents, you can count on the Image Dresser's two side drawers with 18K gold plated locks. The Image Dresser has spacious chest drawers to help you organize your clothes.

For an elegant look, Caha de Oro's Image Dresser with Drawers has a built-in quartz clock in front of the dresser. There's also a removable photo frame that can hold three pictures. All the more your daughter will feel good when she see images of you together right in front where she's fixing up.

Kidstuff characterized by its contoured design, glossy finish, multi-colored layers and spacious drawers can neatly accommodate wide range of items such as clothes, accessories and playthings. For an adventurous look and feel, there's the Bambino with its matte finish and layers of various colors.

You can check out all these exciting products at all leading department stores near you. Own one and start to rediscover the joys of being around each other!

Softee soars out of the box



SOFTEE AND HINDY WEBER TANTOCO OF fashion-forward Culte Femme steps out of the box with fresh and youthful ideas for Softee's designer box collections.

"I'm in love with ideas," exclaims the chic designer. "My love for style and design is not limited to fashion. It's actually been in the back of my mind to expand the aesthetics of Culte Femme and include functional consumer goods."

Hindy moving away from traditional outlets of design is not worrying at all considering her successful fashion label. She always keeps abreast with what's "in" and seeks inspiration from the great gurus of fashion abroad. She then translates it into something more comfortably suited for the Filipina.

"There's always a touch of vintage influence for Culte Femme - a little bit nostalgic as opposed to avant-garde. I am from the 80s so my clothes would always have a preppy look," she says with a smile. "It's part-glam, part-preppy, and part bohemian."

Culte Femme was always confident on what it sought to create and so little has changed since its launch. "It's always been feminine and whimsical in terms of colors, fabric, and prints. It's not a brand that is just black and white," she says. "We're not minimalist either; we've been pretty consistent."

More than a box

The consistency of Hindy and Softee just went well hand in hand. The partnership seemed destined as starting out was not a difficult task at all for Hindy. She was so excited that she went straight home and started working right after the meeting with the Softee executives. Upon arriving home, she got an old facial tissue box, tore it open, and made her own version.

"I would think of many ways to make it look infinitely better," Hindy recalls.

Softee asked Hindy to make two designs. For the black and white design, she wanted something that expressed her Culte Femme aesthetic, leading to a wallpaper-ish look with a brocade-type pattern. For the colored creation, Hindy realized that a simpler design would be more elegant. With this, she went with an austere gold-diamond pattern. "It's kind of subtle. It's a design that men would also be attracted to," she remarks.

The new Softee is really more than a box. Hindy and Softee made sure the designs would make the Softee facial tissue boxes home décor or accents. "I was thinking of how it would look inside the car or on the desk or in a dresser in the bedroom," she shares. Indeed, even the positioning of the prints makes them look like elegant wallpaper designs.

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THIS SUMMER, SHOP WITH YOUR Citibank Visa or Citibank MasterCard and experience a Triple Rewards Treat.

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To join this exclusive promotion, simply register once by texting CITI (space) 16-digit Citibank credit card number to 2366. Registration is free. Upon registration, all qualified purchases until May 31 will earn triple Rewards points.

According to Bea Tan, Citibank's cards business director: "Summer is usually associated with family vacations, or get together with friends and this means you will be on the road more than the usual, shopping to prepare for your travel plans and of course stocking up on food. This is why we focused on these three types of purchases to reward our loyal cardholders."

"We are launching a new Rewards catalog very soon and we also wanted to give our cardholders the opportunity to earn more points to redeem their choice Rewards-be it appliances or toys or electronic gadgets, even shopping and dining certificates or travel packages," added Tan.

So next time you visit the grocery or a department store, or gas up, make sure you charge to your Citibank credit card to enjoy this most generous rewards promotion.

To know more about the Citibank 3x Rewards Points promo, log on to www.citibank.com.ph.

How to be a focused shopper

SHOPPING CAN BE ADDICTING and can go to extremes. In this country ruled by huge malls and inviting shopping places, "shopaholics" abound and many are already suffering from a bad case of the gimmes. People shell out big bucks for trendy clothes, flat screen TV and other goodies only to wind up in a pile of huge debt.

But don't feel too guilty for being an extreme shopaholic and for not having more discipline. Your buying frenzy is a response to intense social pressure, says Harvard professor Juliet B. Schor in her book "The Overspent American: Upscaling, Downshifting and the New Consumer". According to Schor, our culture defines people largely by what they own. And television adds to the problem by showing us characters, like those often-jobless slackers on "Friends", enjoying luxuries they'd never be able to afford in real life.

Yet you can change your spendthrift ways. Here, great ideas to help you get your buying under control.

Take a secret test. Ask yourself, "would I want this if I had to use it/wear it/drive it only when no one could see it?" You don't have to own a leaf blower just because your neighbors do.

Set limits. Never buy anything that costs more than your budget without sleeping on the decision.

Avoid shopping with richer people. They become what Schor calls reference neighbors, with whom you compare living standards. Seeing what they buy makes you spend more too.

Tall the consequence cost. Before you whip out the charge card, remember: No purchase stands alone. Be sure you can afford what it takes to go with the purchase. A new skirt may need a new blouse, scarf and belt. A puppy means vet bills, food and toys.

Spend like a millionaire. In their book, "The Millionaire Next Door: The Surprising Secrets of America's Wealthy" authors Thomas J. Stanley and William Danko found that those who acquire great wealth don't live like Blake and Krystle Carrington on "Dynasty". They get rich the old-fashioned way: paying attention to pennies, driving used cars, clipping coupons and—most important of all—not keeping up with the Joneses.

Get really picky. Don't write "pantsuit" on your wish list. Write "navy pantsuit in washable fabric for less than P1,000." Being a focused shopper makes it less likely you'll regret a purchase once you get it home (how many unworn outfits are hanging in your closet?).

Don't fall for the combo. Whether it's supersize fries, soda and popcorn at the movies or a sofa that comes with a love seat thrown in for only a small amount, package deals equal more pesos. If you didn't know you needed it before you saw the deal, do you really need it at all?

Historic Tutuban Mall on affordable shopping

WHILE OTHER PROPERTY DEVELOPERS engage in a mall-building spree, Tutuban Mall has set its feet firmly in Divisoria, its home for 14 years. Still the top shopping district it was since it opened in 1993, Tutuban Mall has become synonymous with quality products at bargain prices.

It's good fortune of being at the Philippine National Railways (PNR) property and originally used as a train station compound (the structure alongside the birthplace of National Hero Andres Bonifacio) that ensures a steady throng of people milling at its doorstep. The Tutuban Mall is both an icon and a landmark in Divisoria. It provides a one-stop recreational and shopping facility, attracting approximately 200,000 customers daily. Known as the bargain center, the mall appeals to both the C and D and the A and B crowd. Tutuban Mall today is determined to build on its history of innovation and dynamism.

Tutuban Properties Inc vice president for marketing Ding N. Espiritu attributes the success of Tutuban Mall to its ability to cater to a varied market. Along with its transformation into a modern commercial compound as the biggest wholesale and retail shopping complex in the country, the mall has grown from having a cluster building to interconnecting the seven buildings with 1,700 tenants across the country. And while strengthening and then later maintaining its foothold in the local market, Tutuban Mall also extended its reach to more customers with its year-round night market of about 400 outdoor night tenants selling just about everything - from garments, home interiors, to food.

"We cater to all classes of shoppers. Cluster buildings 1 & 2 are wholesalers or biyaheros coming all the way from Baguio, Bulacan, Batangas, Laguna, Lucena, Pampanga, Quezon, and those coming from Cebu, Davao, Zamboanga, Bacolod, Iloilio - they get wholesale prices. Meaning, if they get six to one dozens of an item, they get about 30 percent off. Especially when one pays in cash, he or she gets more discounts. Our Prime Block Mall caters to the upper class. Stores here sell quality goods and high-end items like party dresses, gowns, accessories, jewelries, home decors. For bargain prices, you can buy a P800-P1,000 cocktail dresses selling at about P3,000-P5,000 in other malls. Centermall houses all institutional brands like Levi's, Dickies, Bench, Company B, National Bookstore, Watsons, Nike, Adidas, Converse, Sketchers, and some outlet stores for old styles or models. Here, if you want to buy, say flip flops, you can get it at P800 to P1,000 - a 40-50 percent discount off the rate," Espiritu explained. Adding to its lists of regular tenants is Hanes which will soon have its outlet in Centermall Tutuban.

Tutuban's sense of the market, its own innovative drive, and its insistence on quality yet at bargain prices all have conspired to push the mall even higher. "People get value for money," he added. Plus the fact that Tutuban Mall has the unique advantage of having a multi-level parking building for better shopping convenience, shoppers and sellers are more secure with hundreds of securities deployed in every corners of the mall. "We likewise assign security guards for celebrity shoppers to protect them from the mobbing crowd in Divisoria."

Tutuban Mall gears up to make Divisoria parallel to that of Hong Kong and Bangkok's bargain shopping centers. It has also distinguished itself as the Most Secured and Cleanest Mall in Manila, an award given three years ago by the City Government of Manila.

Occupying 22 hectares, Tutuban Mall positions itself as the powerhouse mall in Divisoria and made it the way it should be.

Aqualtis - Ariston's latest washing machines

ARISTON BY INDESIT - ONE OF the largest brands in the built-in market and perhaps the market leader in Italy, adds a sophisticated twist to its innovative line-up of appliances with the launch of its most modern washing machine - Aqualtis. This is Ariston's expression of its vision to create a washing machine that will meet and even anticipate the needs and demands of their customers.

The profile of an ideal washing machine, the Aqualtis has been designed to be more comfortable in use, flexible, environment-friendly with improved water and power consumption, while caring for the most delicate of fabrics.

Comfort

The ergonomic design of Aqualtis, makes your posture in loading and unloading as natural and comfortable as possible with its door opening completely like a book; to the drum access porthole with a 35cm diameter and the drum with an inclination of 8 degrees. It also ensures more safety, with the dispenser situated inside the door, thus, making it out of reach of children. A more intuitive programming is also applied, with the display being integrated in the door. While a left to right selection order makes up for easier interaction logic.

Flexibility

Built for great demands, the Aqualtis exceeds every expectation. Even with its standard dimension, its loading capacity is 50 percent higher than other washing machines. Plus, it has versatile flexible features like the Duvet cycle, Bed & Bath cycle, Mini-load, and Shirts cycle. The Duvet cycle treats your feather duvets, eiderdowns, quilts or padded anoraks with utmost care, eliminating the need for the Dry Cleaners. The Bed & Bath cycle, enables you to wash all bedding and towels for the entire family in a single cycle.

The Mini-load option showcases extreme flexibility for the demands of everyday washing, which lets you have great results in small loads. While the Shirts cycle, eliminates the risk of creases, and gives extreme care to color and fabric of your favorite shirts.

The Aqualtis is available in 7.5 kg. AQXXL129 EX and 6 kg. AQXL109 EX capacity models.

For more information call or visit our Ariston/Indesit showrooms: Shangri-La (631-8282), SErendra (856-2518), or at the MC Home Depot Fort Bonifacio (815-8875).

EXPERIENCE Ariston's Aqualtis, the latest innovation in washing machines, both in aesthetics and performance.

GET THAT LOOK

Honeywell Air Circulators for your interior

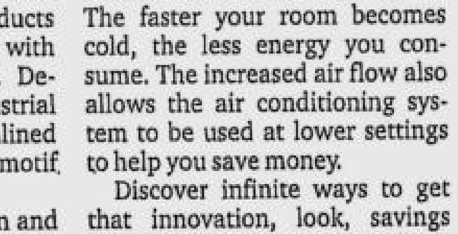
SHOPPING FOR THAT PERFECT fan to complement your interiors can definitely be a problem. Mismatched colors, faux finishes, and bulky designs make it a sore thumb in the interesting mix of your interior, making you want to hide these fans whenever you can.

To solve this problem, Kaz USA, a trusted healthcare and home environment products manufacturer, has come up with Honeywell Air Circulators. Designed by an American industrial team, its round and streamlined design matches the modern motif of any home.

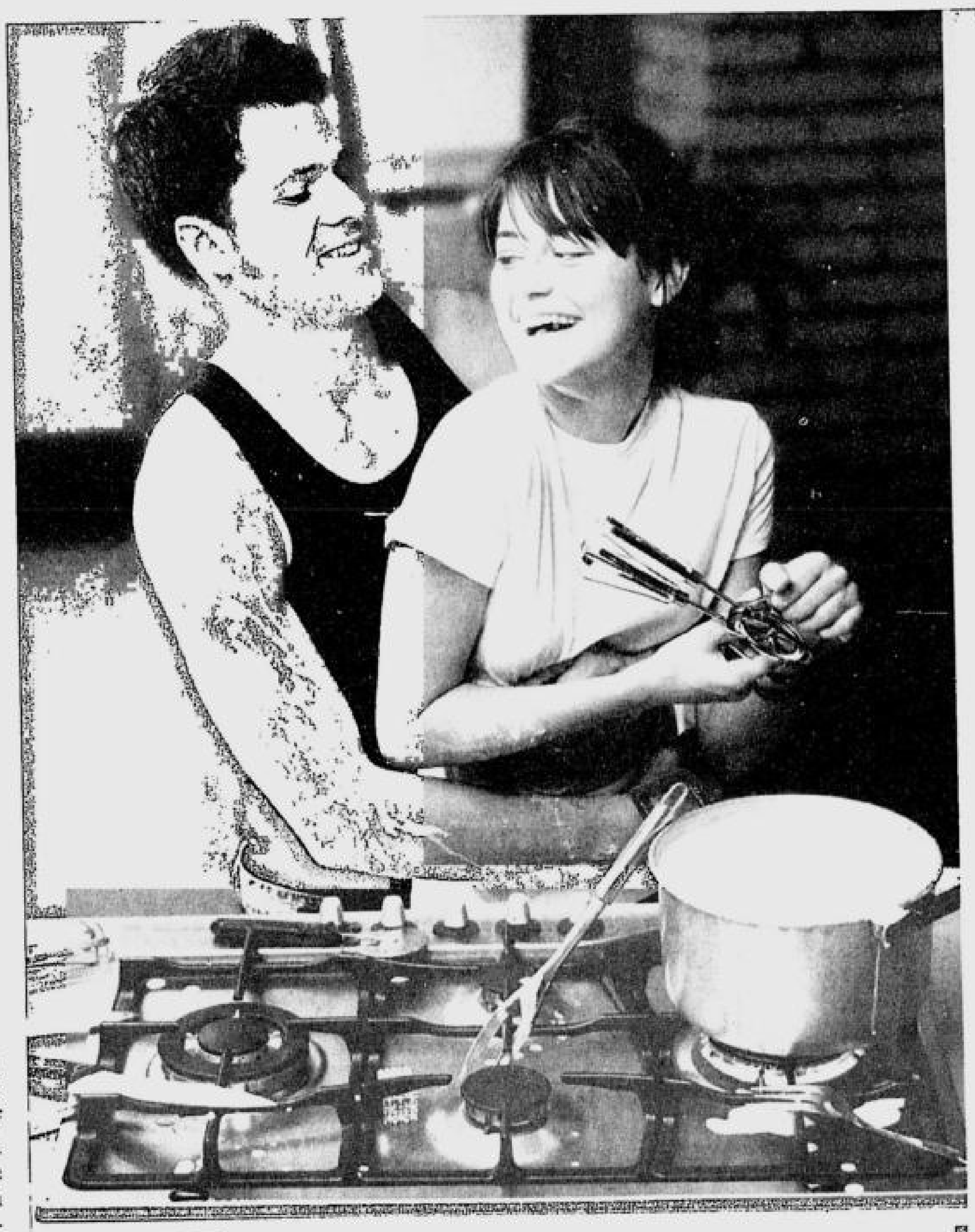
It also has the single, twin and multi-pivot air circulator designs to blow the conventional single fan away. The Honeywell air circulator is a fusion of trends of state-of-the-art technology and innovative design, breaking the traditional concept of a fan as a simple fanning instrument. Its revolutionary Turbo Force Technology enhances the oscillation of cool air from your air conditioner and evenly distributes it around your room.

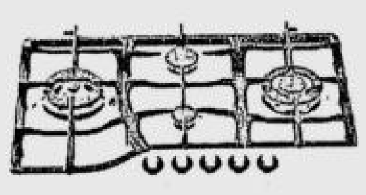
What's more, it's energy saving and environment-friendly. Test results of a room's temperature reveal that as cool air from the air conditioners flows downwards, a difference of 3°C can be distinguished between the upper and lower parts of the room. However, with the use of a Honeywell air circulator, the temperature difference drops to 0.5°C in 10 minutes while traditional fans can only drop the difference to 1°C after 150 minutes. The faster your room becomes cold, the less energy you consume. The increased air flow also allows the air conditioning system to be used at lower settings to help you save money.

Discover infinite ways to get that innovation, look, savings and style. Grab a Honeywell air circulator now. Available at S&R Westgate (Alabang), S&R Aseana (Baclaran), S&R Fort, and S&R Congressional Membership Shopping.



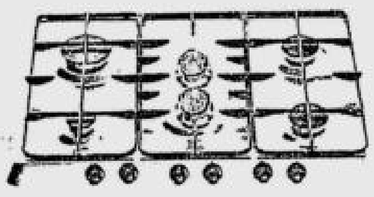
HONEYWELL air circulators are available in single, twin, and multi-pivot designs to match any modern home interiors.





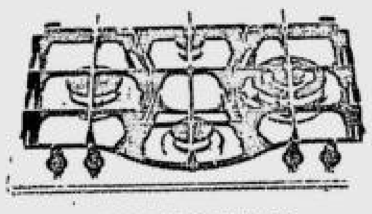
PH 750 RT(AX) GH

- 75 cm gas hob
- 5 gas burners: 1 triple crown burner, 1 double crown dual regulation, 1 semi-rapid burner, 1 auxiliary burner
- 1 hand electronic ignition
- Flame failure gas cut-off system
- Cast iron pan support
- Anti-scratch stainless steel finish



PF 760 AS (AX)

- 70 cm gas hob
- 6 gas burners: 2 double face burners, 1 rapid burner, 2 semi-rapid burners, 1 auxiliary burner
- 1 hand electronic ignition
- Flame failure gas cut-off system
- Anti-scratch stainless steel finish



PH 640 MST (AX)

- 60 cm. gas hob
- 4 gas burners: 1 triple crown burner, 2 semi-rapid burners, 1 auxiliary burner
- 1 hand electronic ignition
- Flame failure gas cut-off system
- Cast iron pan support
- Anti-scratch stainless steel finish

Caution: Playful banter in the kitchen may cause scratching.

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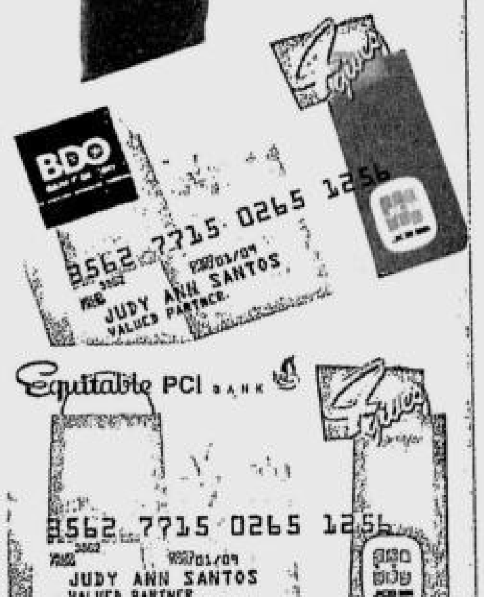

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or visit www.equitablecard.com

PLDT Home Rewards' family summer spree

BREAK OUT OF THE SUMMER LULL AND dive into an amazing and unforgettable family vacation. All it takes is one amazing card offering only the best treats for you and your loved ones.

The new PLDT Home Rewards Card is your ticket to affordable indulgence all year long. With this card, you get instant discounts, freebies and perks for travel, dining and shopping in over 140 partner establishment nationwide. There are no vouchers to redeem, no forms to fill out and no points to accumulate. PLDT Home Rewards Card lets you and your family enjoy the best in life hassle-free.

Fly with your hubby and kids to the ultimate summer destination on board Asian Spirit at 20 percent off, Seair at 15 percent off and Air Philippines at 5 percent off published rates. Or sail with Negros Navigation at 50 percent off to Bacolod, Iloilo, Cagayan de Oro, Roxas City and Puerto Princessa. These discounts are yours by simply presenting your PLDT Home Rewards Card upon purchasing your ticket.

Soak up the sun, sand and surf in the sizzling summer destination of your choice. There's Boracay Regency and Escondido Beach Resort in Boracay, Club Noah Isabelle in Palawan, Amarela in Panglao, Bohol; Cabana Beach Resort and La Union Country Resort in La Union, and CocoBeach Resort in Puerto Galera. Just flash your PLDT Home Rewards Card and get instant discounts on room rates plus premium perks.

Great accommodations also await at Fort Ilocandia Resort Hotel in Ilocos Norte, Waterfront Hotel in Cebu and Davao and Sarabia Manor in Iloilo. When in Manila, check in at Linden Suites and Manila Pavilion. You can save so much on accommodations with these PLDT Home Rewards' partner hotels and resorts.

While you're at it, get an Extreme Magic Sing for fun karaoke nights with friends and relatives. And, instead of lugging around your pasalubong and baggage, send it ahead through FastPak at discounted rates. With your PLDT Home Rewards Card, you can get awesome savings from these and other partner establishments.

Before you hit the beach with the kids, do some prep work using your PLDT Home Rewards Card. In Manila, beat the bulge at Red Corner Gym or Pinnacle Health Pointe. When in Pampanga, drop by the Excel Badminton Center and smash your way to a slimmer you. For luxurious skin and body pampering, there's The Spa, Ystilo and Mendez Medical Group. More perks await cardholders at partner spa and beauty facilities nationwide.

For an afternoon of family fun, flash your PLDT Home Rewards card and play more games at Timezone or belt out more tunes at IO Family KTV. For a fabulous food finds, go to Trio or Pasto and get a free appetizer or swing by Little Asia and get a free tower roll. Head over to Shakey's and enjoy free pizza or Dencio's for free sisig. Get special perks at Café Havana, Bollywood and Café Adriatico. All these you can have for a minimum food purchase. You can also drop by McDonald's for a free upsize on fries or a drink of your choice until April 30.

Be sure to expect all these PLDT Home Rewards privileges available to your all throughout the year. So whatever the season or occasion, PLDT Home Rewards has got you covered.

More surprise rewards

The perks just keep on coming with PLDT Home Rewards.

Now, you can call your special someone anywhere in the Philippines or abroad for free as PLDT Home Rewards Card also comes with "Load Rewards," where you get an initial load of P30 for free NDD and IDD calls. This initial load can also be used for free PLDT Vibe Internet access. The initial load is activated upon dialing 10-122 or a call transaction, and is valid for 30 days.

Aside from the free initial load, PLDT will also automatically load your PLDT Home Rewards Card on your birthday and other special occasions. You will be notified via SMS, email or call out every time PLDT loads your account. This gesture is a simple and heartfelt way of celebrating the loyal PLDT subscriber.

All post-paid residential and SME PLDT subscribers can apply for the PLDT Home Rewards Card. To apply, simply visit the PLDT Business Office, fill out an application form and present it with a Valid ID and a P150 one-time membership fee. After payment and processing, you'll instantly receive your PLDT Home Rewards Card and use it to your heart's desire in over 140 partner establishments nationwide.

All these rewards are yours for the taking. Sign up for a PLDT Home Rewards Card now.

For your convenience, the PLDT Home Rewards Card Application Form is available online at www.mypad.net. You may also call 101-838 for more information.

A 'Wiki' history of the credit card

EVER WONDER HOW THAT powerful piece of plastic you're handing to the cashier came about? A quick search at the Internet's free-information site Wikipedia reveals a pretty fascinating story.

The credit card was the successor of a variety of merchant credit schemes. It was first used in the 1920s, in the United States, specifically to sell fuel to a growing number of automobile owners. In 1938 several companies started to accept each other's cards.

The concept of using a card for purchases was invented in 1887 by Edward Bellamy and described in his utopian novel "Looking Backward". Bellamy uses the explicit term "credit card" 11 times in his novel (Chapters 9, 10, 11, 13, 25 and 26) and three times (chapters 4, 8 and 19) in its sequel, "Equality".

The concept of paying merchants using a card was invented in 1950 by Ralph Schneider and Frank X. McNamara in order to consolidate multiple cards. The Diners Club, which was created partially through a merger with Dine and Sign, produced the first "general purpose" charge card, which is similar but required the entire bill to be paid with each statement; it was followed shortly thereafter by American Express and Carte Blanche. Western Union had begun issuing charge cards to its frequent customers in 1914.

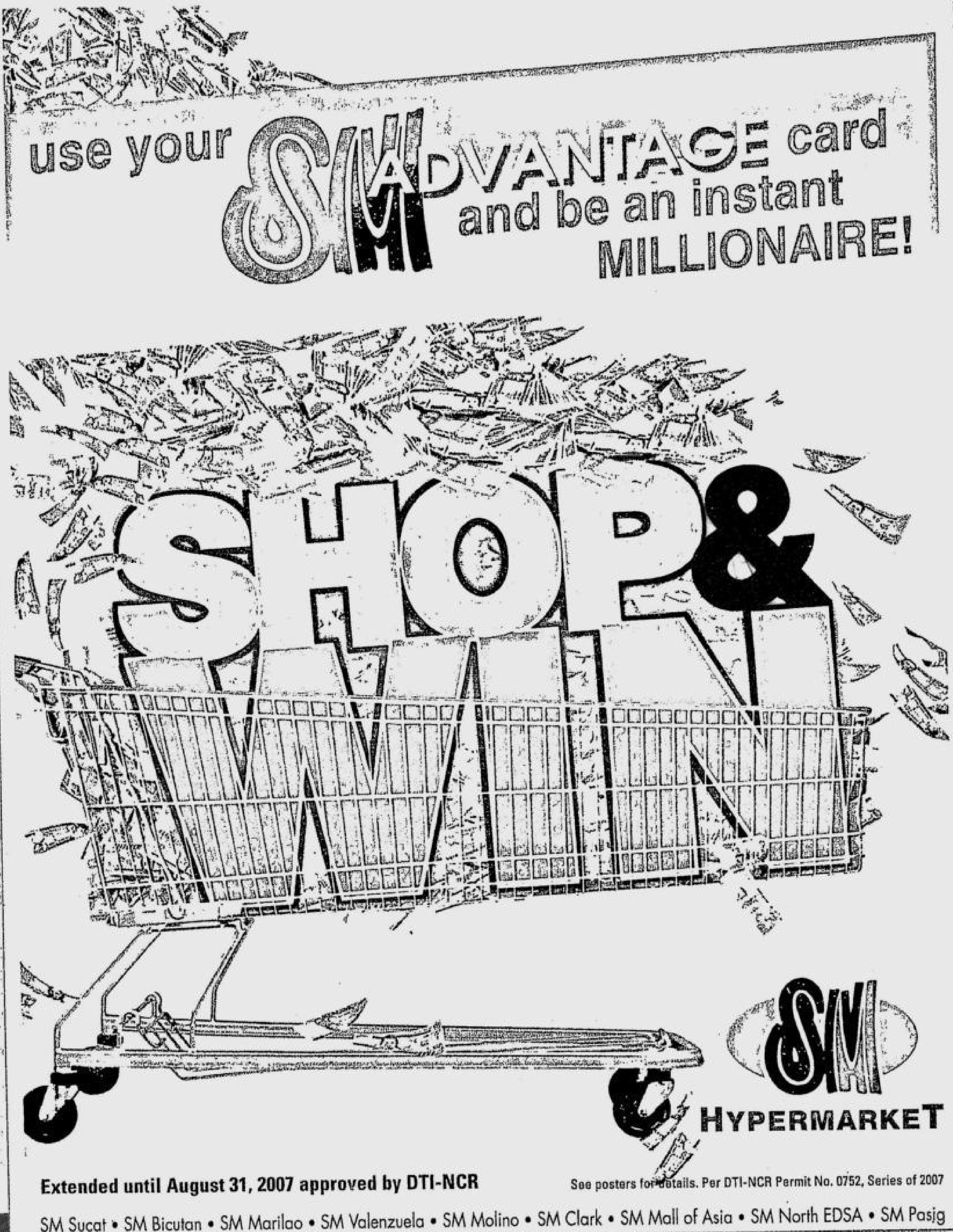
Bank of America created the BankAmericard in 1958, a product which eventually evolved into the Visa system ("Chargex" also became Visa). MasterCard came to being in 1966 when a group of credit-issuing banks established MasterCharge. The fractured nature of the US banking system meant that credit cards became an effective way for those who were traveling around the country to, in effect, move their credit to places where they could not directly use their banking facilities. In 1966 Barclaycard in the United Kingdom launched the first credit card outside of the United States.

There are now countless variations on the basic concept of revolving credit for individuals (as issued by banks and honored by a network of financial institutions), including organization-branded credit cards, corporate-user credit cards, store cards and so on.

In contrast, although having reached very high adoption levels in the States, Canada and the United Kingdom, it is important to note that many cultures were much more cash-oriented in the latter half of the 20th Century, or had developed alternative forms of cash-less payments, like Carte bleue, or the EC-card (Germany, France, Switzerland, among many others). In these places, the take-up of credit cards was initially much slower. It took until the 1990s to reach anything like the percentage market-penetration levels achieved in the States, Canada or UK. In many countries acceptance still remains poor as the use of a credit card system depends on the banking system being perceived as reliable.

In contrast, because of the legislative framework surrounding banking system overdrafts, some countries, France in particular, were much faster to develop and adopt chip-based credit cards which are now seen as major anti-fraud credit devices.

The design of the credit card itself has become a major selling point in recent years, the value of the card to the issuer being related to the customer's usage of the card. This has led to the rise of co-brand and affinity cards-where the card design is related to the affinity (a university, for example) leading to higher card usage. In most cases a percentage of the value of the card is returned to the affinity group.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- Yoyoy remembered /F3
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Cannes pulls it off with top films, popular winner

BRAD Pitt with Angelina Jolie after the world premiere of "Ocean's 13" REUTERS

CANNES, FRANCE—THE Cannes Film Festival pulled it off in its 60th year, picking a popular winner from an eclectic competition lineup that had many more hits than misses.

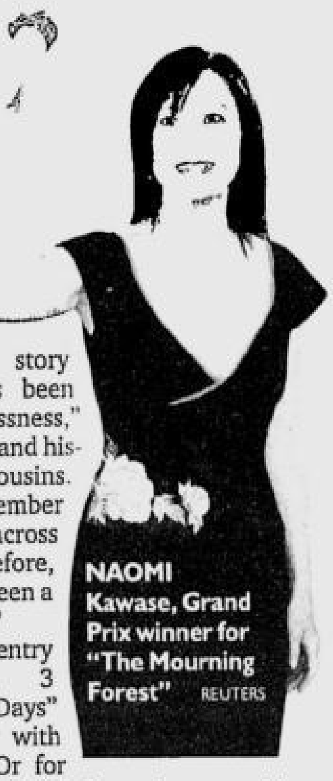
The annual movie extravaganza also attracted a string of big Hollywood stars to its red carpet, always key to a festival's success, and reports of a healthy crop of new film deals signed on the margins meant 2007 would go down as a vintage Cannes.

"The Cannes film story this year has been one of selflessness," said film critic and historian Mark Cousins. "I can't remember that coming across as strongly before, so I think it's been a great Cannes."

Romanian entry "4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days" walked away with the Palme d'Or for best film out of 22 in the main competition, a popular choice after critics had raved about its hard-hitting story simply but powerfully told.

A further sign of the growing stature of Ro-

CANNES/ F2



NAOMI Kawase, Grand Prix winner for "The Mourning Forest" REUTERS

FATIH Akin, Best Screenplay for "The Edge of Heaven" REUTERS

CRISTIAN Mungiu, left, (with unidentified guest) Palme d'Or award for "4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days" REUTERS

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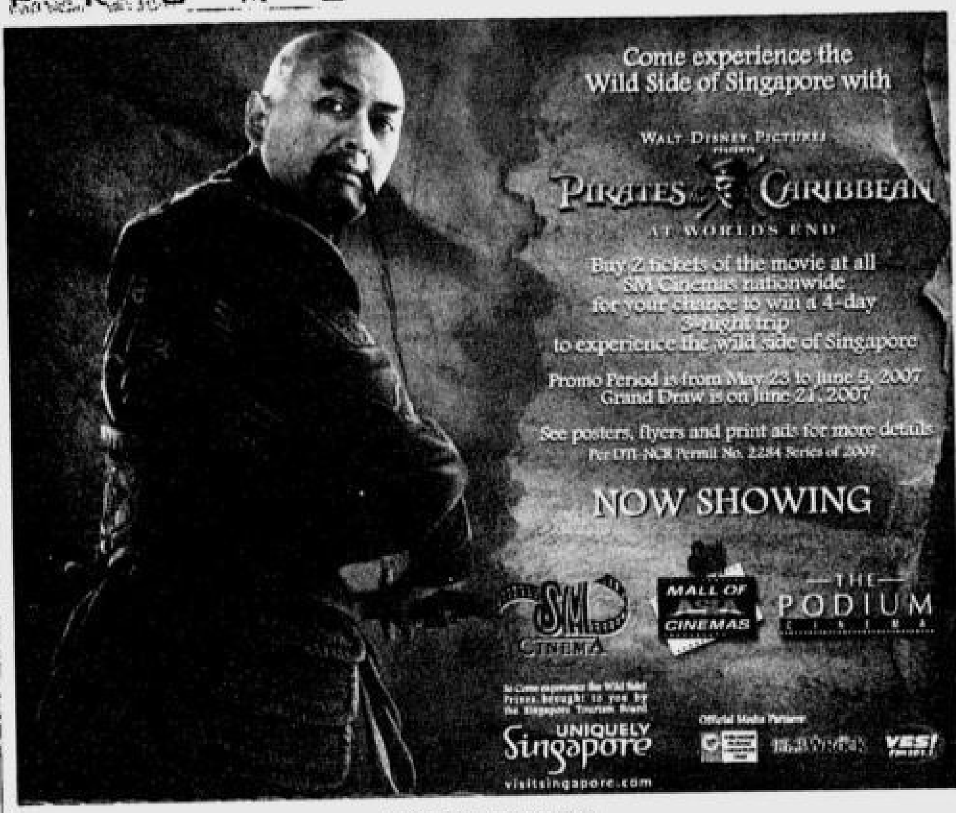

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FEEDBACK

From Tess Saynor (tess.saynor@gmail.com), Chirnside Park, Vic 3116, Australia:

My husband and I watched "Miss Saigon" here in Melbourne recently. I was very impressed with the performance of our very own Leo Valdez as The Engineer. He was superb and outstanding! The Australian audience was also quite taken by his singing and stage presence. There are other Filipinos in the cast and they were also good in their own right.

FYI

From "Mildred" (fudgey_24@yahoo.com):

The beauty queens Dustine and Kandice, not Charla and Mirna, finished second in "Amazing Race All-Stars." FYI *lang po*.

Thanks, Direk

From Susan Defensor (sansudefensor@gmail.com), 15 Rosal Street Tandang Sora, Quezon City:

I sighed with relief when I read Direk Joey Reyes' article, "Big Brother has a lot of explaining to do" on May 17.

Kudos, Direk Joey, for [expressing] what I think are the very same sentiments of many "Pinoy Big Brother" followers, including me.

Man, this batch of housemates is *so boring*. I feel they have nothing new to offer viewers.

Come to think of it, though, is this their fault or Kuya's?

I hope Direk Joey continues to write insightful articles.

About Juday

From Ivy Mallari (innoprint@skyinet.net), San Andres, Manila:

Juday's move (going from Kapamilya to Kapuso) showed impatience and lack of gratitude to the network that [recognized] her craft and built much of her career. She justifies it as just a job. Still it's [proof] that she can easily give up trust ... for money.

Cannes pulls it off with top films . . .

From page F1

manian cinema, the movie follows student friends Otilia and Gabita as they are ruthlessly exploited when one goes to have an illegal abortion.

Yet despite being set in the pitiless and colorless landscape of socialist Eastern Europe, the story underlines the lengths to which friends go to save each other.

The choice was a rare example of the nine-member jury and the wider audience of journalists and critics agreeing on the Palme d'Or winner.

There will also be few complaints about other winners.

The Grand Prix runner-up prize went to the acclaimed "The Mourning Forest," a lyrical Japanese movie about mourning and grief directed by Naomi Kawase.

Best director was Julian Schnabel for "The Diving Bell and the Butterfly," based on the true story of French journalist Jean-Dominique Bauby who suffered a stroke and was paralyzed yet managed to write a book using one eyelid to communicate.

Best screenplay was awarded to German-Turkish director and writer Fatih Akin for "The Edge of Heaven," a cross-border story of love and reconciliation, while best actor was Konstantin Lavronenko from Russian Andrei Zvyagintsev's "The Banishment."

Best actress was Jeon Do-yeon for South Korean competition entry "Secret Sunshine."

JULIAN Schnabel, Best Director for "The Diving Bell and the Butterfly"
REUTERS

ANDREI Zviaguintsev, representing Best Actor Konstantin Lavronenko for "The Banishment"
REUTERS

Cannes too big?

One complaint heard along the palm-lined Croisette this year has been that Cannes is too big for its own good, with thousands of journalists packing screenings and press conferences and too many stars jostling for media attention.

Cannes veterans wondered if, for example, Leonardo DiCaprio should be asked to the festival to showcase his environmental documentary "The 11th Hour" when it seemed to be more about having a famous face in town than the quality of the film.

But Jay Weissberg, critic for trade publication Variety, argued that there was still room for everyone.

"It is what Cannes does," he said. "It's trying to highlight art films and yet broaden it out so that the general public thinks everything is relevant." Also off competition was Angelina Jolie, who was praised for her role in "A Mighty Heart" about the kidnapping and beheading of reporter Daniel Pearl by Islamic militants.

Michael Moore, winner of the Palme d'Or in 2004, also got the festival buzzing with his provocative "SiCKO" documentary about the US health care system and American greed.

George Clooney and Brad Pitt were on the red carpet to promote blockbuster "Ocean's 13," Irish rockers U2 performed for a large crowd while Kylie Minogue, Elton John, Sharon Stone and Naomi Campbell worked the non-stop party circuit.

Reuters

JEON Doyeon, Best Actress for "Secret Sunshine"
REUTERS

Yoyoy, other iconic comedians remembered

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

WE JOIN OTHER FANS OF COMEDIAN-SINGER **Yoyoy Villame** in mourning his demise. Through the years, we've enjoyed Yoyoy's novelty and satirical songs and deliciously sassy jokes.

We were also fortunate to get to know Yoyoy personally, when we joined him and **Dulce** on a performance tour of some European countries a number of years ago. We thank Dulce for inviting us to be her "gofer" on the tour, because it enabled us to savor the delights of countries like Switzerland, Germany and Austria—and really get to know Yoyoy Villame as artist and person.

It was a delightful introduction, because Yoyoy turned out to be as much fun as a person as he was as a performer. He regaled us with stories about his early days as a "singing driver," how "Butchikik" came to be, the origins of "Magellan."

Even better, he entertained us with private "concerts" of many of his songs, as we drove from one country to the next. For hours, Yoyoy would sing his entire repertoire of pop-novelty compositions and adaptations and made all those hours fly—and zing!

Perhaps the best thing about Yoyoy was even after he became very successful, he never lost sight of his *masa* origins. They kept him honest and made him unique. Yay, Yoyoy!

Yoyoy's recent passing has also gotten us teary-eyed as we remember other funny people who are no longer around to regale us with their goofy, loony, loopy view of life:

We fondly remember **Vic Pacia**, the comedian-TV host who pioneered in comic impersonation in these parts. Vic was funny, but was also very intelligent, so the result was his unique brand of "thoughtfully provocative" satire and humor.

Serious comedian

Another outstanding comedian was **Bert "Tawa" Marcelo**. A serious, thoughtful man when he wasn't slaying viewers with his Bulakeño humor, he carefully "constructed" his jokes and comic characters with the discipline of a fine craftsman.

And yet, wonder of wonders, the minute he started to perform, all that preparation was replaced by a zest that was exciting to behold!

Chichay also comes to mind as a one-of-a-kind comedienne who parlayed her "toothlessness" into a deliciously sassy career that spanned decades.

Most of all, we remember **Nida Blanca.**

Actress, comedienne, TV host, singer, dancer and all-around great person, Nida was a one-woman entertainment industry—and a good friend besides.

It hurts when we realize that her murderer has yet to be brought to justice. So, we urge her colleagues and fans to renew their efforts to pressure the authorities to solve her case this year.

Justice for Nida Blanca—now!

'Kasal' on video

The 2006 Metro film fest blockbuster, "Kasal, Kasali, Kasalo" has been released on VCD/DVD formats. In the rollicking marital romp directed by **Joey Reyes, Judy Ann Santos** and **Ryan Agoncillo** play newlyweds who have to contend with all sorts of problems before their young marriage finally experiences smooth sailing.

The DVD version includes the movie's trailer, behind-the-scenes shots, subtitles, and the "Hawak Kamay" video with the movie's theme song sung by **Yeng Constantino.**

'Everest'

Discovery Channel's "Everest: Beyond the Limit" replays its "Summit Dreams" episode at 6 p.m. on May 29. Viewers are introduced to the expedition team, which is uniquely made up of climbers from all walks of life.

It takes seven overnight stops just to get the team to Base Camp. And tragedy strikes as one of the expedition Sherpas dies from altitude sickness. The climbers are stunned, and expedition leader **Russell Brice** is distraught—in 13 seasons, he has taken 137 people to the summit and never lost a single man before this year.

Danger continues to stalk the team as it moves to Advanced Base Camp: A cameraman collapses, and an emergency room doctor leads a full-scale rescue mission when a member of another team collapses with a cerebral edema. Will everyone on the team be able to continue?

Classical ballet, popular music

SHOW TIME

THE MANILA BROADCASTING COMPANY (MBC), the City of Marikina and Ballet Manila celebrate the collaboration of classical ballet and popular music in a night of performances featuring prima ballerina Lisa Macuja tomorrow, 7 p.m. at Teatro Marikina, Marikina City.

The show features Andrew E as special guest.

Reggae, rock 'n' roll

Jack Daniel's Global Music Tour presents the debut album launch of Coffeebreak Island.

The four-man ensemble's music is a unique fusion of ska, reggae and rock 'n' roll flavors.

Its 14-track album under FMAP Records is inspired by The Specials, The Selecter, The English Beat, Hepcat, Toots & The Maytals, Bob Marley, The Police and Sublime.

Coffeebreak Island is Paul Puti-An (vocals/guitars), Romel Manuel (bass), Raffie Miranda (keyboards) and Jun Nogoy (drums/back-up vocals).

The band will play its original compositions on June 2, 6 p.m. at Tiendesitas. Admission is free.

Visit www.coffeebreakisland.com for details.

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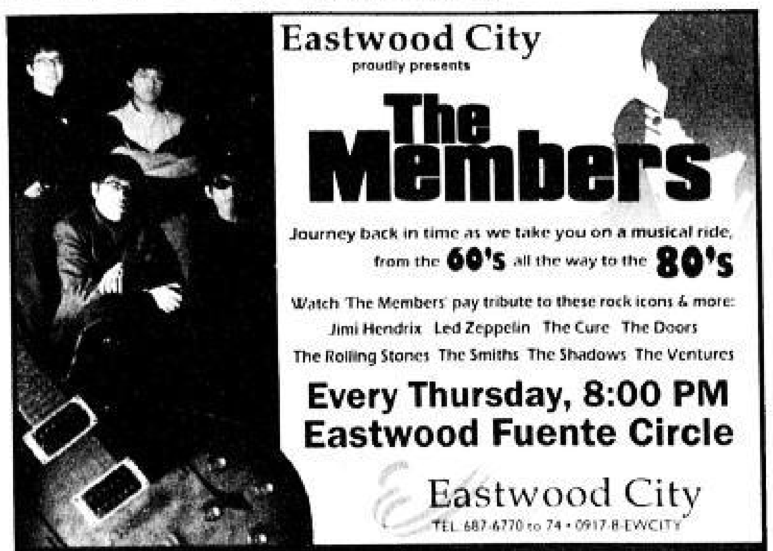

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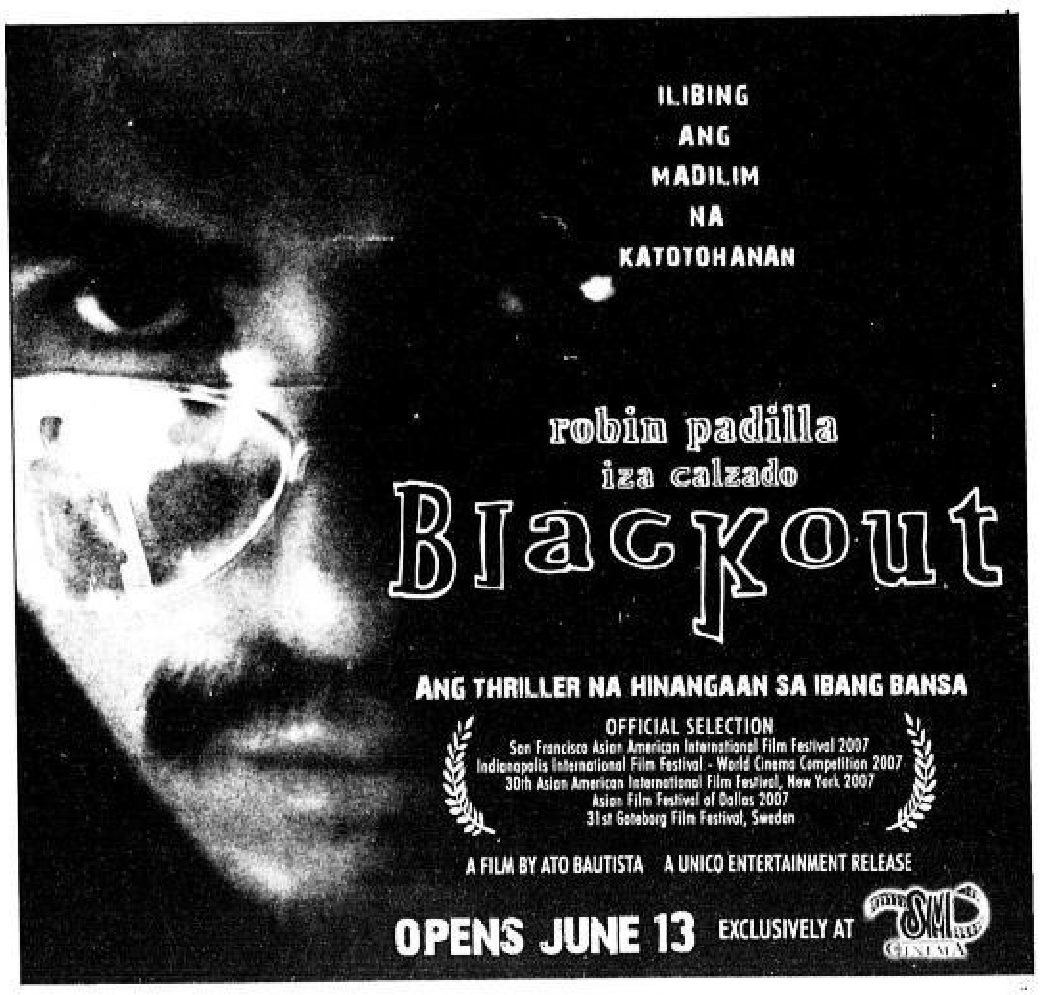
4 MR. BEAN HOLIDAY 1:40, 4:00, 6:20, 8:40, 11:00 G



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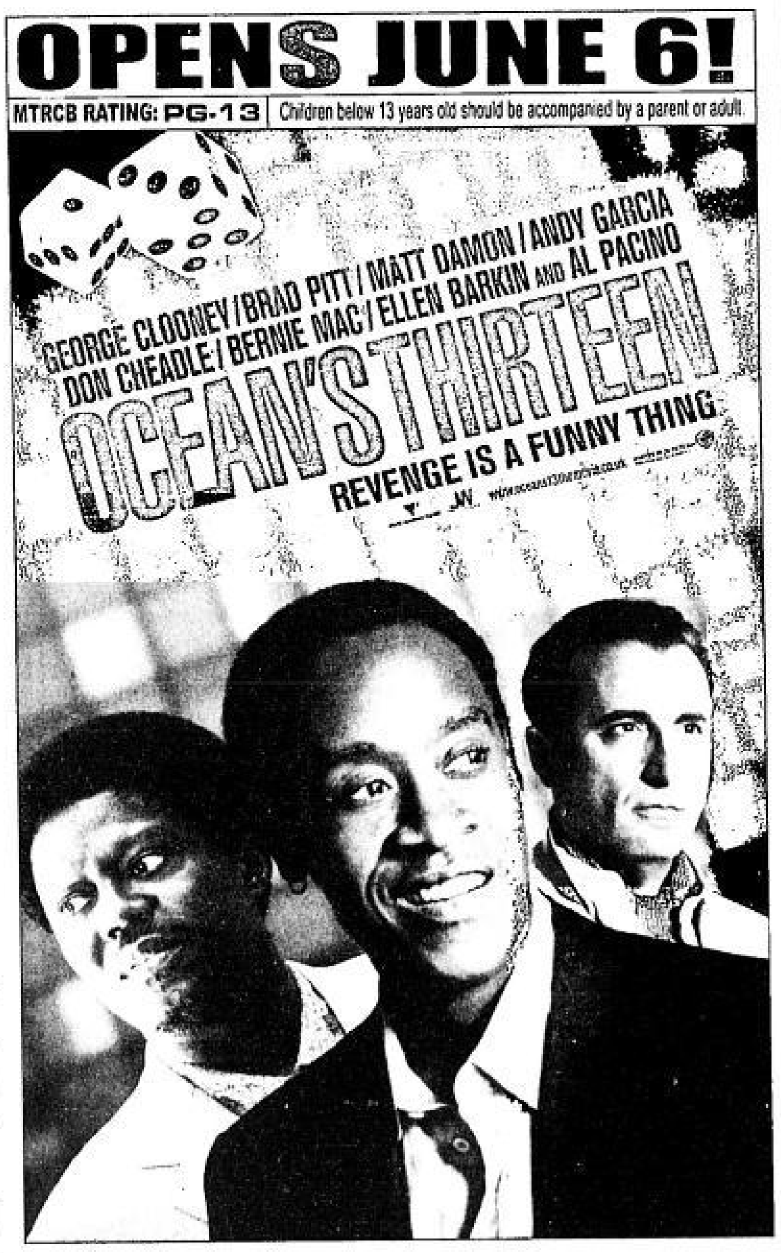

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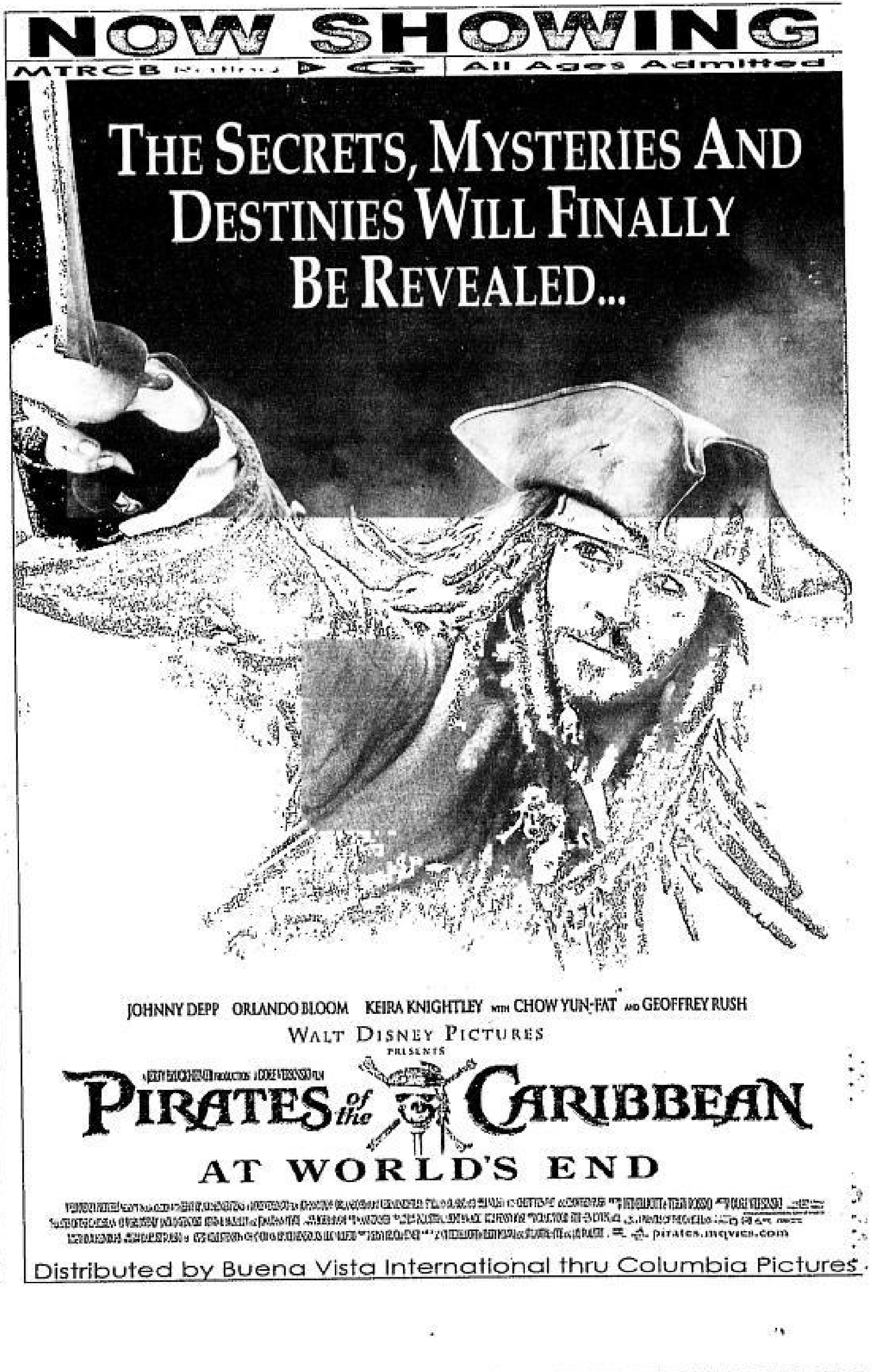

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12:00, 3:20, 6:40, 10:00

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OPENING TODAY

From page F6

Zodiac

Stars Jake Gyllenhaal, Mark Ruffalo, Robert Downey Jr., Anthony Edwards, Brian Cox

Directed by David Fincher

Based on a book by San Francisco Chronicle cartoonist Robert Graysmith, this movie is a "true-crime docudrama on the manhunt for … the Elvis of serial murderers … who tormented California from 1969 to 1978." Richard Corliss of Time describes it as "less a serial-killer thriller than an 'All the President's Men' wannabe … [but the script] manages to be true to the complexity of the case while never losing cohesion or coherence." David Ansen of Newsweek agrees: It's "meticulously crafted [and, in spite of its length, it] holds you in its grip from start to finish." Kevin Crust of Los Angeles Times calls it an "intelligent thriller … [that] captures the dark allure of an unsolved crime."

"ZODIAC"

Mr. Bean's Holiday

Stars Rowan Atkinson, Willem Dafoe, Emma de Caunes, Max Baldry

Directed by Steve Bendelack

Britain's obnoxious yet amiable klutz goes on vacation in France. Quite naturally, Mr. Bean's misadventures at the Cannes film fest result in madness and mayhem. Derek Elley of Variety thinks it's "chucklesome, surprisingly warm, but rarely laugh-out loud … Atkinson's role is essentially beyond critique." Matthew Turner of View London says that it "[is] enjoyable … softens the edges of the Bean character and aims for a more classic silent comedy vibe." Nick de Semlyen of Empire rants: It's "padded with lazy dialogue, a boring plot and Willem Dafoe … almost disturbingly unfunny."

"MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY"

Bordertown

Stars Jennifer Lopez, Antonio Banderas, Kate del Castillo, John Norman

Directed by Gregory Nava

Loosely inspired by the mysterious murders of young women in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, an industrial border town near El Paso, Texas. The film reportedly elicited boos at this year's Berlin film fest. According to the Berlinale Review at cinematical.com: "Obviously a passion project for Lopez (who is also credited as producer), [it] has a very, very strong first half, but stumbles a bit toward the end when it turns preachy." Vince Leo of Qwipster.net complains that "as heart-wrenching as the reality is, the film that the [director] has made falls short of being honorable." Kirk Honeycutt of The Hollywood Reporter concurs: "It wants to be a thriller, a piece of investigative journalism, a political soapbox and a vehicle for Lopez."

"BORDERTOWN"

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ZODIAC R13	MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY	SHREK 3 G
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Tense, well-acted …

From page F5

And the ending leaves you feeling more than a bit unsatisfied. The killer was never caught; the prime suspect, a convicted child molester played eerily by the beefy John Carroll Lynch, died in 1992. And so the movie just sort of dangles out there with no sense of closure.

For a while, though, "Zodiac" buzzes with creepiness and fear. The killer methodically tracks down and takes out young people all over the Bay Area, then sends encoded letters to various newspapers, including the Chronicle, and demands that they print them in their entirety—or he will kill again, elaborately.

Graysmith has always been curious about symbols and puzzles and insinuates himself with cops and reporters, learning what he can and trying eagerly to help. He actually shows more interest than Toschi's partner who drops out of the case (a stoic Anthony Edwards, with whom Ruffalo shares an easy banter).

But eventually, he is the only one who cares. Tracking the Zodiac killer, as he called himself, sucked the life out of nearly everyone involved. Despite its many strengths, the movie about the killer tends to have the same effect. *Christy Lemire, AP*

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	3 SHREK 3	4 SHREK 3	5 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: AT WORLD'S END		
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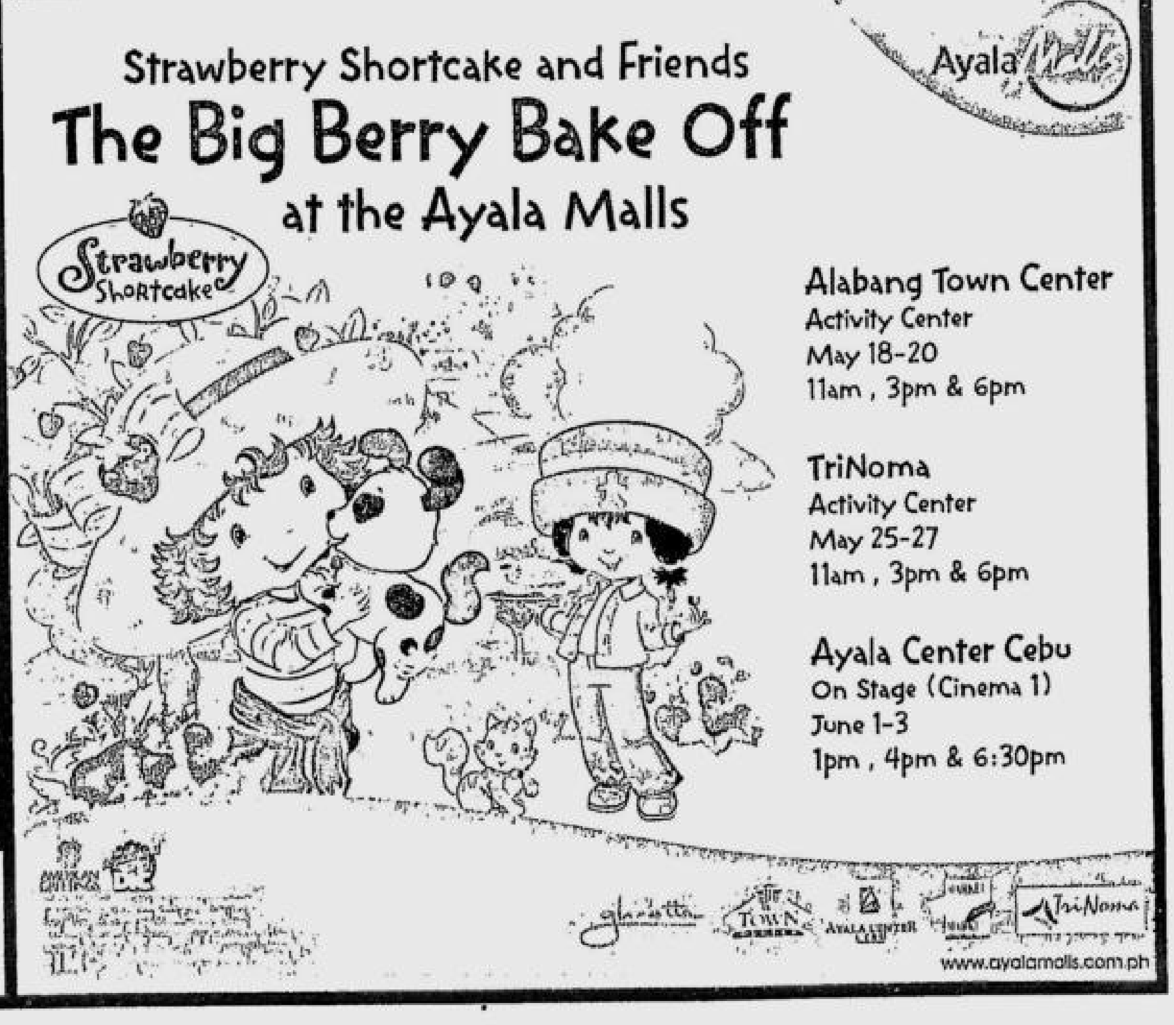

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Tense, well-acted, but way too long

From page F6

that was actually made during that time.

It is low-key, straightforward, a bit faded. No stylized tricks, nothing flashy about it.

But in toning things down, Fincher also drags them out. "Zodiac" runs an astonishing two hours and 40 minutes, and it feels like it. The director has said there was no way to make the film any shorter—that to tell this story completely, it had to be this long—and he clearly went to great lengths to get the many complicated elements just right.

But is he serious? "The Departed," which just won best picture at the Academy Awards, was two and a half hours and even that felt too long. If you are going to ask your audience to sit happily for that sort of duration, you had better give them an absolute masterpiece of cinema.

No masterpiece

"Zodiac" certainly has its moments, but it is no masterpiece.

It is solid for the first hour and a half: taut and tense, thrilling and often darkly funny. Fincher and screenwriter James Vanderbilt ("Basic"), working from the true-crime best-seller by former San Francisco Chronicle political cartoonist Robert Graysmith, keep you guessing and make you feel as if you are right in the thick of the chase. (And they manage the rare feat of capturing newsroom culture accurately—especially the gallows humor, a necessary defense mechanism when dealing with a horrific story.)

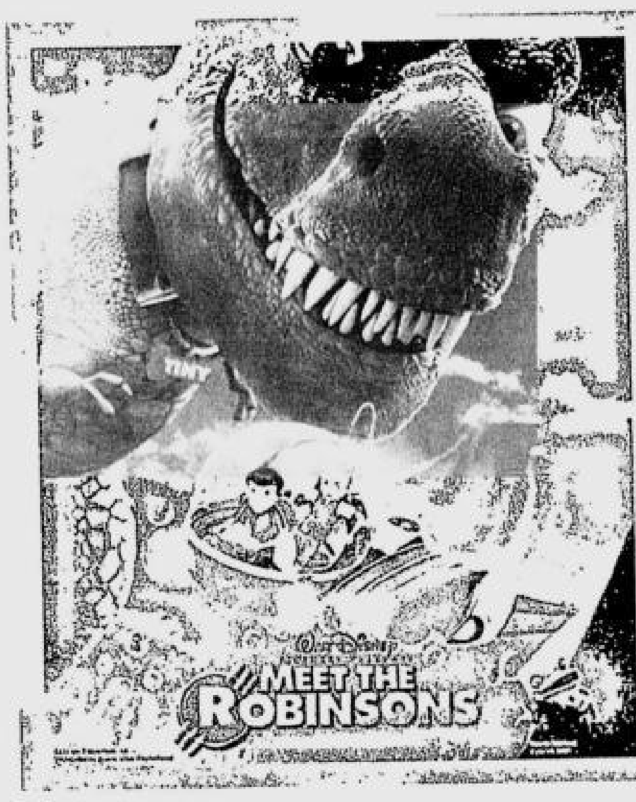
The film features some excellent performances from a strong cast, including Mark Ruffalo as tenacious San Francisco police Inspector David Toschi (supposedly the inspiration behind Clint Eastwood's "Dirty Harry" character) and Robert Downey Jr. as self-destructive Chronicle reporter Paul Avery, who covered the Zodiac killings. Brian Cox absolutely tears it up as celebrity defense lawyer Melvin Belli, a role any character actor would have a ball playing and one that seems ideally suited for Cox's brand of off-kilter bravado.

As the obsessed Graysmith, though, Jake Gyllenhaal is both the central figure and the weakest link. He is the one who keeps the hunt alive when there seems to be nowhere else to go with it, and even though he is not a detective or a reporter, his fascination with the serial killings instinctively propels him. But he is never fleshed out sufficiently to make you believe that he would sacrifice his safety and that of his family to find the truth. We are told repeatedly that the former Eagle Scout is just a genuinely good guy, but that is not enough.

No closure

As the killings subside and the official investigation lags, so does the film, causing you to glance reflexively at your watch and realize, wow, there is still another entire hour left.

TENSE/ F4



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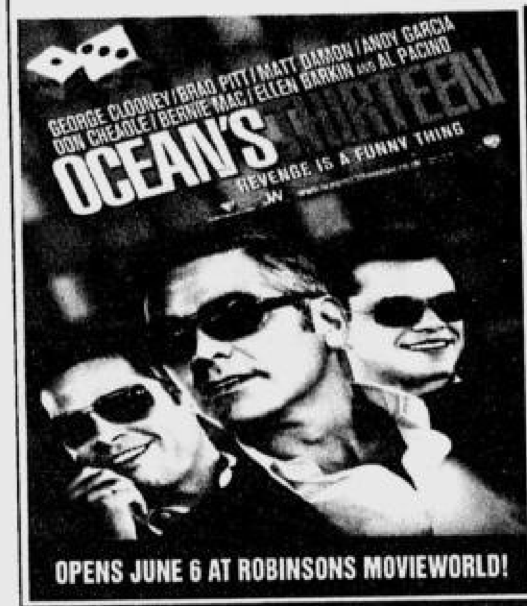
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Stars Tyron Perez, Paolo Ballesteros, Marky Lopez, K Brosas, Chokoleit

Directed by Cris Pablo

Described as a "feel-good comedy," this digital movie chronicles the travails of three naïve provincial lads who get lost in the big, bad city. "Metlogs," which means "metrosexual jologs," is from the same director as "Duda/Doubt," "Bathhouse" and "Bilog/Circles." An entry in last year's Cinema One Originals film fest, it won the Audience Award. "It's fun-filled and the gay community fully supported it," says jury chair Robbie Tan. Manilagayguy.com opines that the director "always attempts to impart a realistic view of gay life … [which is] laudable … he successfully shares some worthy insights." Exclusively at IndieSine Robinsons Galleria.

Paano Kita Iibigin?

Stars Regine Velasquez, Piolo Pascual, Eugene Domingo, Erich Gonzales

Directed by Joyce Bernal

Star Cinema and Viva Films pooled their resources for this dramatic love story that serves as the first big-screen team-up of Velasquez and Pascual. (They were previously paired on TV drama shows.) Drumbeaters claim that this movie is more "daring and mature" compared to the duo's previous efforts. "For one thing, I play a single mother," Velasquez explains to the media. Pascual, for his part, portrays a thrill-seeker who is determined to destroy himself after the death of his girlfriend and friends. Another sign of maturity are the two's supposedly torrid kissing scenes. According to the IMDb.com, this flick was originally titled "Fallen" and "Sana Ikaw Na."

OPENING/ F4

Sundance man talks on indie filmmaking

By Marinel R. Cruz and Jacky A. Oiga

"YOU DON'T JUST SHOW YOUR film in a film festival and wait to see what happens. You prepare for it," Geoff Gilmore, director of the Sundance International Film Festival, told an audience in a symposium on independent filmmaking held at De La Salle-Taft Saturday.

Gilmore, the festival's artistic director for the past 17 years, was here and in Cebu last week for the four-hour filmmaking seminar dubbed "Sundance in Manila."

Gilmore, who is also head of the Sundance film fest selection committee, discussed various topics including the kind of films that make it to the film fest circuit, how to market these films and how a filmmaker could prolong his success in this field.

The following are excerpts of the speaker and audience exchange during the symposium's Q&A portion:

How has the festival changed through the years?

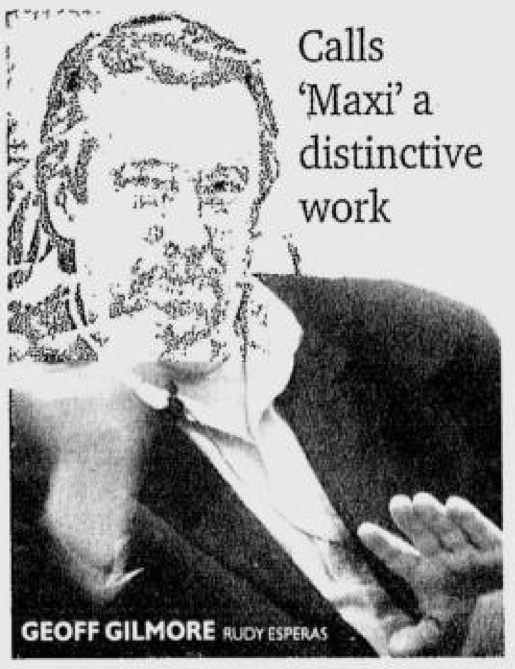
The world of independent film has changed in America. It's constantly changing. Its success, which began with video-taping, has become a much broader phenomenon than what it was back then.

One change in independent filmmaking is that many more films are being produced. And a lot of these have a somewhat significant cast. Actors couldn't get good parts in major films so they get involved in independent films.

Name one or two of your favorite films.

I can't name films: All I can say is that directors Zhang Yimou and Wong Kar Wai are two of the best directors of this decade.

How many Asian films have been submitted to the Sundance film fest this year?



Calls 'Maxi' a distinctive work

GEOFF GILMORE RUDY ESPERAS

A lot. We got a group of Chinese or Korean films, those that we also see in the film fest circuit. If we get (Filipino) films that were shown only in film fests like the Cinemanila, we'd be happy to show them.

What advice can you give budding filmmakers?

You can't sit and wait for government to change. You've got to be entrepreneurial. You can't reach the audience by waiting for 10 years for budget. Don't wait for subsidy to come to you. You've got to make that film and find that audience.

You also have to make sure you save some money for post-production. Digital production is also economical compared to film.

What do you tell filmmakers who are now having a certain level of success in the field?

You have to be persistent. You must closely work with people you trust. You should circulate, develop relationships and reach out.

You don't just show your film in a film festival and wait to see what happens. You prepare for it: The plotting of the film, the positioning of that film, the hyping of that film in any given festival, the getting of the audience, the dealing with the press, the selling of the film and the presentation of the film.

When someone tells you, "We've made it to closing night [of a festival]!" Think twice. At closing night, three quarters of the festival is gone. There's no one in this business who wants to stay in the duration of a film festival. They won't stay in Sundance anymore than they want to stay in Cannes. The old saying goes, "You can't wait to get there and you can't wait to get out." When I left on Tuesday from Cannes, my plane was full of people who are leaving.

The question is how were you chosen for a festival? Were you spotted? Were you positioned? It's a huge advantage to be positioned.

The Toronto film fest is a terrific film festival, I keep saying. It's one of the best film festivals in the world. It gets more international participation than any other North American festival. I wish I could say we have more, but Toronto has a huge audience. It draws you up against a huge number of world premieres of major films so you will be competing with whatever film that's out there.

What do you look for in a film?

Originality. We want something distinct, fresh and different. I see over 40 horror films a year. They try to make the same things, tell stories you already know. I can't tell you how many coming-of-age stories I've watched, but "Maximo Oliveros" is a distinctive work. We've not seen anything like it before.

You should make films that are about you, make them your own story.

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WEEKEND BOX OFFICE

Top 10 movies at the North American box office for the three-day weekend beginning May 25

Pirates of the Caribbean (At WorldÕs End)
Walt Disney Pictures

TW	LW	Title	Gross	WR
1	☆	Pirates of the Caribbean	$112.5 mln	1
2	1	Shrek the Third	$51.0 mln	2
3	2	Spider-Man 3	$13.7 mln	4
4	☆	Bug	$3.3 mln	1
5	12	Waitress	$3.1 mln	4
6	3	28 Weeks Later	$2.5 mln	3
7	4	Georgia Rule	$1.9 mln	3
8	5	Disturbia	$1.8 mln	7
9	17	Wild Hogs	$1.1 mln	13
10	6	Fracture	$1.1 mln	6

This Week, Last Week — Weeks in Release

☆ New release

Based on studio estimates compiled on Sunday

REUTERS

REVIEW

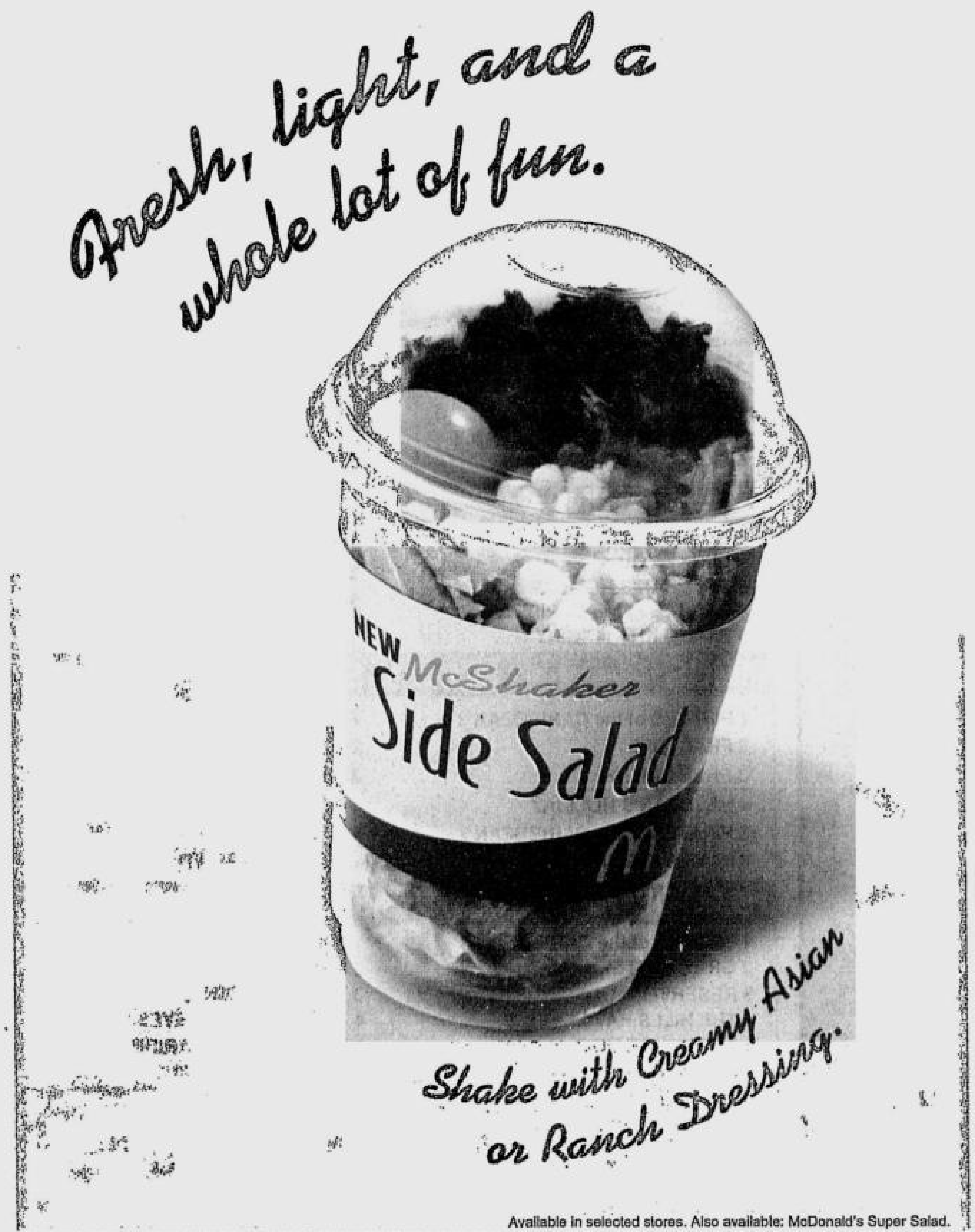
JAKE Gyllenhaal and Chloe Sevigny in "Zodiac"

Tense, well-acted, but way too long

NEW YORK—David Fincher is a director of estimable talents. He is technically imaginative, with a great eye for detail and a feel for mood. In films like "Se7en," "Fight Club" and "Panic Room," he sets a scene, sucks you in and shows you over and over that you are in the hands of a visual master.

His abilities have often made him seem like a bit of a showoff—which is partly what makes the comparative aesthetic subtlety of "Zodiac" so striking. In telling the real-life story of a serial killer who terrorized the San Francisco Bay Area during the late 1960s and early '70s, he makes you feel as if you are watching a film

TENSE/ F5



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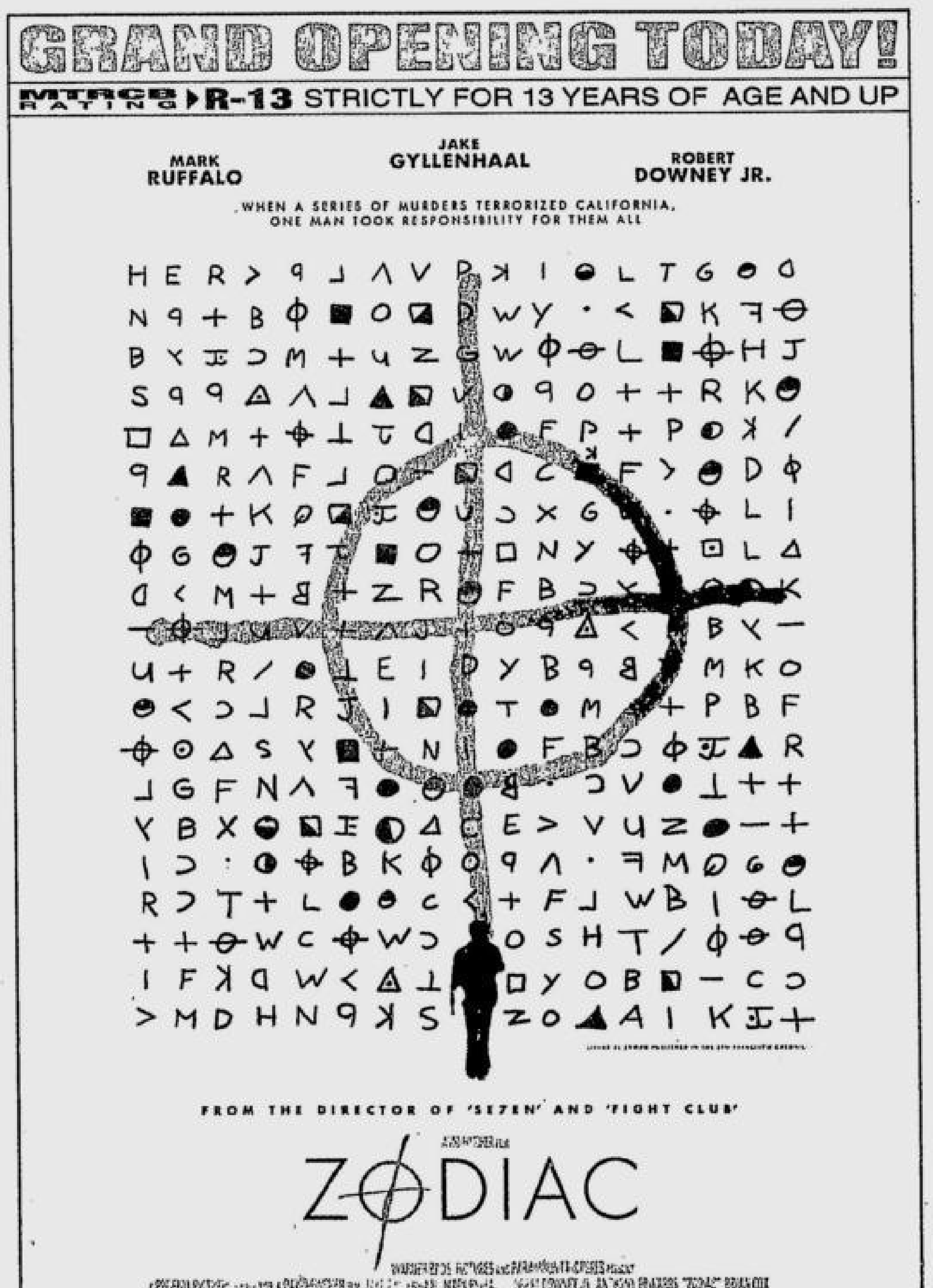

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JAKE GYLLENHAAL
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WHEN A SERIES OF MURDERS TERRORIZED CALIFORNIA, ONE MAN TOOK RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEM ALL
FROM THE DIRECTOR OF 'SE7EN' AND 'FIGHT CLUB'
ZODIAC
BASED ON REAL EVENTS